POPERY

IN

ALLIANCE WITH HEATHENISM:

LETTERS

PROVING THAT WHERE

THE BIBLE IS WHOLLY UNKNOWN,

AS IN THE HEATHEN WORLD,

OR ONLY PARTIALLY KNOWN,

AS IN THE ROMISH CHURCH,

IDOLATRY AND SUPERSTITION ARE INEVITABLE.

By JOHN POYNDER, Esq.

"...................... Ubi passim
"Palantes error certo de tramite pellit;
"Ille sinistrorsum, hic dextrorsum abit; unus utrique
"Error, sed variis illudit partibus............."

HOR.

SECOND EDITION.

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PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

In sending a second Edition of this little work to press, the writer would gladly, in compliance with the suggestion of more than one friend, have altered the epithet of "Popery," in the title-page, as designating the Roman Catholic religion, had he not deemed it, upon mature consideration, more correct to retain the former term, for the following reasons. First, that in employing that word, he only follows all those who have appeared on the side of the Protestant faith, ever since a protest was made against the errors of the Romish creed. Until, therefore, it can be shown that Cicero was mistaken, when he said, "Magister optimus est Usus," the value of precedent will perhaps be allowed its proper weight. Secondly, in turning to the definition of Dr. Johnson, we find that "Popery" is described by that accurate etymologist, as "the religion of the Church of Rome." Now, until the members of that church can shew that Popery is not the religion of the Church of Rome, but some other religion, it is clear that no wrong is done them by the application of the term; and if it be not competent to *them* to dispute this title, then how much less right have any members of our own church to suggest that injury is inflicted in the case in question! If the members of the Church of Rome

be any thing else than Papists, they then renounce, *ipso facto,* the authority of the Pope, but so long as they continue to acknowledge him, either for their civil or ecclesiastical head, so long are they Papists, and so long is Popery their religion, as Dr. Johnson expressly defines it to be. Thirdly, if, in compliance with modern liberality, or rather with the affectation of it, Protestants were now to change this designation, it is obvious that such circumstance would not affect any existing fact, or alter the nature of things, since it would be still as true that the members of the Romish church either acknowledge allegiance to its temporal head, or are found in alliance with its spiritual head, notwithstanding that certain members of our own church may prefer to suppress all recognition, both of the one and the other connexion. For these reasons, I cannot but prefer the original term by which our Protestant ancestors (who were at least as well informed on this subject as ourselves) agreed to designate the religion of the church of Rome.

It is still, however, with the most anxious and sincere desire for the best, and highest, interests of the Romish laity, that I would entreat them to consider how far the unqualified deference paid by them, not merely to a man like themselves, but to one whom the Holy Scriptures characterise as eminently "the man of sin," and whom all history agrees in proving to have remarkably deserved that title, from the beginning—how far, I say, such implicit deference to human authority can consist with the allegiance due to the only Lord and Saviour, who is the head over all things to his church; how far the erection of tradition into an equal rank with the express revelation of God, can consist with the exclusive reverence, which is claimed by the Almighty for the inspired oracles of divine truth; and whether the single fact of these records of eternal life being kept from the people at large, to this very hour, by the authority of any man, or set of men, does not, of itself, demonstrate, beyond all dispute, an unsound and indefensible state of things, which dreads and deprecates inquiry,

as depending for its continued existence upon the extent of the darkness and ignorance which may prevail in the world, reminding us of a passage in that accurate observer of human nature, Shakspeare—

We of th' offending side
" Must keep aloof from strict arbitrament,
" And stop all sight-holes, every loop from whence
" The eye of reason may pry in upon us."

Unwilling to offer the slightest offence, by any single term, or phrase, which it might be possible, consistently with truth, to expunge, or modify, I beg unequivocally to assure my fellow-subjects, of the Romish laity, that I feel the most sincere affection for their persons, while I entertain no respect for their system—that I view, with the deepest commiseration, that spiritual bondage in which they continue to be held; while I can entertain no such sympathy for those " blind guides" who presume to exact an obedience for which they can shew no warrant from Scripture, and no justification, on the ground of right reason, or common sense. Let them only once resolve to judge for themselves, and to take the Scriptures of truth as their guides, and they will at once throw off the yoke from which it was the glory of our own Reformation to deliver us. It is evident that there is no extent of doctrinal error denounced by our blessed Lord as upholding the spiritual dominion of the interpreters of his law in the Jewish church, which does not, with equal, or greater, force apply to the ecclesiastical professors of his gospel in the church of Rome; and if this fact required confirmation, the late complete exposure by the Irish Protestant clergy, in the British metropolis, of the anti-scriptural casuistry long taught in the United Kingdom, with the sanction of episcopal and sacerdotal authority, would abundantly establish it.*

* I allude to the two celebrated meetings at Exeter Hall, in London, on the 20th of June, and 11th of July, 1835, at which Lord Kenyon presided.

It is really painful to reflect, that notwithstanding the boasted light of the present age, so many persons who are respectable and amiable in all the relations of life, should deliver themselves up, as if divested of their eyes and ears, to the usurped dominion of the Papal hierarchy, when the slightest attention to the primitive institution of Christianity, would reveal to them the Saviour of sinners in all his fulness, requiring no mediators by whom he is to be approached, but able and willing—as the one only mediator between an offended God, and his guilty creatures—to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them—inviting all, without exception, or restriction, to take of the water of life freely, and proposing to our faith that single sacrifice, and those transcendant merits, as alone atoning for sin, and justifying the offender, which all the institutions and ceremonies of the papal church, tend only to obscure, and invalidate.

Nor let it be supposed that this attempt to be useful to the laity of the Romish church, is the act of an enemy, rather than the intention of a friend. It is not, indeed, reasonable to expect that truth can always be told, without offence, when even an apostle found it necessary to appeal to his readers in that remarkable expostulation—"Am I your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"—"It is not easy" (says Hooker) "to speak to the contentation of minds exulcerated in themselves, but that "somewhat there will be always which displeaseth."

To those who think that every thing in the form of controversy should be avoided, I would observe, in the language of Lord Bacon—"Neuters in contentions are "either better, or worse, than either side," leaving it to themselves to consider to which class they belong—while to those who may be disposed to cavil at some strength of expression in the conduct of my argument, I would add, in the language of the same illustrious writer—"Earnest writing must not hastily be condemned, for "men cannot contend coldly, and without affection, about

"things which they hold dear and precious. A politic "man may write from his brain, without touch and sense "of his heart, as in a speculation which appertaineth not "unto him; but a feeling Christian will express, in his "words, a character of zeal, and love."—Again, I ask, that He who has all hearts in his hand, may accompany this publication with his blessing, and cause it to issue in his glory.

London, Nov. 5th, 1835.

PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

The celebrated Dr. Middleton, the translator of Cicero, and the librarian of Cambridge, who was an eye-witness of the abominations which he records, has furnished the basis of the following Letters, in that able Letter which he wrote from Rome, entitled "The Conformity between Paganism "and Popery." The writer of the following Letters has however been indebted to other sources of information, and more especially to the observations of an able writer on Indian affairs, long resident in that country;* which tend to establish the same connexion between the heathenism of papal Rome, and of pagan India, at the present moment, as may be traced between Rome under the Christian popes, and under the Heathen emperors. Proofs of a similar identity have also presented themselves in the corruptions of Popery at present existing in a portion of the united Empire, which afford a perfect transcript of the worst abuses of the ancient idolatry of the Gentile world.

To this latter spot, certain persons occasionally resort who are advocates for what they term a liberal and enlightened policy, although they there witness the utmost degradation of their species, in the unlimited power exercised by the Romish priesthood over the consciences and persons of their bigoted adherents; but it is impossible that

* The late Charles Grant, Esq., M.P., formerly Chairman of the East India Company.

men of real religion should witness the idolatries which defile that country, and observe such superstitions as had scarcely their counterpart in heathen lands, (all practised, be it remembered, under the eye, and with the sanction, of the popish hierarchy and clergy of Ireland,) —it is impossible, I say, that such persons should witness scenes like these, without contemplating idolatry in the same light in which the Bible exhibits it, and without abhorring those pollutions of doctrine and practice which the word of God invariably represents as perilous in the extreme, both to those who profess, and those who patronize them.

In consequence of the large accession, in Protestant England, to the numbers of those who profess the Romish faith, and of the great increase both of their places of worship, and religious establishments, since the concession of the Romish claims, the attention of the Protestant public appears, more than ever, due to the consideration of the difference existing between their own, and the Romish church. If it can be shown that there is a near alliance between the Romish religion and the Heathen religion, the difference between the Church of England and the Church of Rome will be rendered still more apparent. I propose, therefore, to consider the conformity between Popery and Paganism, premising only that I do not wholly pretend to originality, but am indebted to the valuable writers already alluded to, for many of these remarks. The more learned of my readers, whose attention may never have been turned this way, will not be displeased to find their thoughts diverted into a new channel; while such as are in quest of truth will hail every attempt to enlighten the world upon the subject of the gross superstitions of modern idolatry, in a professedly Christian church, and their connexion with the ancient idolatry of the Heathens, before the introduction of Christianity.

If the following be a faithful and correct statement of the conformity between heathenism and popery, what did any members of our own church, our government, or our parliament, promise themselves or their cause, by the sup-

port they may have tendered to the Roman Catholic claims? Why were they not rather found on the side of the ark of God, when their ancient foes were unusually vigilant and active? "If Baal be God, follow him; but if the Lord "be God, then follow him." The Roman Catholic question was never one of a merely political or secular nature, nor were the interests which it involves of a secondary or subordinate character. The state of suspense and jeopardy in which the Protestant Church was long periodically placed, terminated at last in concession to the claims of the Roman Catholics, because certain persons, who might and ought to have known better, determined to regard this question as one of mere human policy, without permitting the paramount consideration of religion—I mean the fundamental difference between the Protestant and Popish Creeds—to form a part of their calculations, or to influence their conclusions. So long as this great question was merely argued upon principles of secular expediency, it is no matter of surprise that sagacious statesmen were taken in their own craftiness, and that they were unable, under their mode of treating the subject, to deal with arguments which were at least as plausible, if not as valid, as their own. They ought to have taken higher ground, and have resolved to stand by the constitution, which would then have stood by them. If they had reasoned about the religious abominations, and political evils, of popery as did Queen Elizabeth, and King William, Lord Burleigh, and Lord Bacon, Sir John Temple, and Lord Clarendon, Sir Matthew Hale, and Bishop Burnet, their difficulties would have vanished at once; they would then have stood firmly on the rock which the providence of God, and the wisdom of their ancestors, had placed under their feet; nor would all the sophistry of crafty and designing men have moved them from the true interests of our Protestant empire, or induced them to yield one inch of that sacred ground for which our martyrs had bled at the stake, and our warriors had triumphed in the field. If peace had been their object, they should have taken a statesmanlike view of this great ques-

tion in all its breadth and length, and have considered that although a temporary and hollow peace might be obtained by conceding to Papists, a portion of civil, and political, of legislative and executive power, yet that such characters must have been traitors to their own church and cause, if they could rest satisfied with a moderate share of that power, or with anything less than ascendancy for their own church and party. This fearful experiment however has been made. It may possibly follow that the real Protestants of this country (I do not mean the nominal ones,) who are far too enlightened and too free to breathe in the same atmosphere as popery, and still less, to witness patiently its daily encroachments, or submit to its galling yoke, will be heard in their turn. If the people of this country could not endure the pretensions of popery at the great epochs of the Reformation, and the Revolution, much less is it likely that they will endure them now, when a greater degree of religious light is diffused over the nation, and when the principles of civil liberty are better understood than ever.

It is only, however, as the religious character of popery is properly estimated by the nation at large, that a successful stand can eventually be made against her pretensions—whether ecclesiastical or civil; and the time appears to have arrived, when every member of the Protestant church, who supposes he may have any thing to contribute to the general stock, is bound, with the humble female commended by our Lord, to do what he can; and with another, who was equally honoured with his approbation, to cast his mite into the common treasury. The present attempt is, indeed, no more; but such as it is, may it please the great Head of the church, ("without whom nothing is strong, nothing is "holy,") to favour it with his blessing, and to crown it with success! And since, in the degree that we are brought to understand the worldly and intriguing character of the religion of "the Man of Sin," we shall be the better able to estimate the value of the reformed religion we profess, I shall conclude with a passage from Bishop Burnet's Abridg-

ment of his own History of the Reformation, the whole of which Preface indeed, has as remarkable an application to the present times, as if expressly designed for them.*

"That Religion is chiefly designed for perfecting the "nature of man, for improving his faculties, governing his "actions, and securing the peace of his own conscience, "and of society in general, is a truth so plain, that without "further arguing upon it, all will agree to it. Every part "of religion, then, is to be judged by its relation to the "main ends of it; and since the Christian doctrine was re-"vealed from heaven, as the most perfect and suitable way "that ever was, for advancing the good of mankind, no-"thing can be a part of this holy faith, but what is propor-"tioned to the end for which it was designed; and all the "additions that have been made to it, since it was first deli-"vered to the world, are justly to be suspected; especially "where it is manifest, at first view, that they were intended "to serve carnal, and secular ends. What can be rea-"sonably supposed, in the papacy, where the Popes are "chosen by such intrigues, either of the two crowns, the "nephews of the former Pope, or the craft of some aspiring "men, to entitle them to infallibility or universal jurisdic-"tion? What can we think of redeeming souls out of "purgatory, or preserving them from it, by tricks, or some "mean pageantry, but that it is a foul piece of merchandise? "What is to be said of implicit obedience, of the priestly "dominion over consciences, of the keeping the Scriptures "out of the people's hands, and the worship of God in a "strange tongue, but that these are so many arts to hood-"wink the world, and to deliver it up into the hands of an "ambitious clergy? What can we think of superstition "and idolatry of images, and all the other pomp of the "Romish worship, but that by these things the people "were to be kept in a gross notion of religion, as a "splendid business, and that the priests have the art of

* This valuable abridgement, by Burnet himself, of his voluminous history, was recently reprinted by the University of Oxford at a moderate charge.

" saving them, if they will but take care to humour them,
" and leave that matter wholly in their hands? And, to
" sum up all, what can we think of that constellation of
" prodigies in the sacrament of the altar, as they pretend
" to explain it, but that it is an art to bring the world, by
" wholesale, to renounce their reason, and sense, and to
" have a most wonderful veneration for a race of men
" who can, with a word, perform the most astonishing
" thing that ever was?"

LETTERS, &c.

LETTER I.

On the use of Incense, and Holy Water.

THE USE OF INCENSE.—This is a custom which has descended in a straight line from Heathenism, as is evident from Homer, Virgil, Theocritus, and Ovid. The first Christian martyrs opposed the use of Incense with such fortitude, that the mode of trying and convicting them under the heathen emperors, was merely to require them to throw a grain of it into the censer, or on the altar, which they as invariably refused, and for which refusal they forfeited their lives. (See Act. Martyr. Nicandri apud Mabill. Iter. Ital. vol. i. p. 247; Durant. de Ritibus, l. 1. c. 9; Jerome's Works, vol. iv. Epist. ad Heliod.) and under the Christian Emperors, the rite was considered by the early Christians as so peculiarly heathenish, that the very places or houses where incense could be proved to have been offered were by a law of Theodosius confiscated to the Government. (See Gothorf de Stat. Paganor. sub Christian. Imper leg. 12, p. 15.) In all the old sculptures of heathen sacrifice, may be seen a boy in a sacred habit attending the priest, with a small box of incense for the altar. (See Montfaucon Antiq. vol. ii. plate 23.) Thus in the church of Rome, a boy attends the priest, with the sacred utensils, especially the incense vessel, of which the priest makes abundant use through the service, by waving it round, and over, the altar: and thus at this moment in

China, the use of Incense is a part of their idolatry. "In this temple," (says one of the suite in the late Embassy to China,) "I found a print of the head of our "Saviour, and *incense vessels* placed before it. The priest "showed me a book containing the service which he said "they read when they worshipped this picture." And again, "I am now writing to you from a temple in which "are upwards of a hundred priests, and as many Idols. "About fifty priests worship (with morning and evening "prayers) images of Buddah. There are three hundred "images placed on a line: before these, the priests burn "tapers, *offer incense*, and recite prayers, sometimes "kneeling, and repeating, over and over again, invocations; "and sometimes putting the forehead to the ground in "token of adoration, submission, and supplication." (See this letter at length, in the Times Journal of the 17th Sept. 1817.)

THE USE OF HOLY WATER.—No member of the Romish Church ever enters, or quits, a church without being sprinkled with it, which is performed by the priest on solemn days, while on common occasions, the person helps himself from a vessel at the door. This practice is so notoriously derived from heathenism, that the Romish writers are obliged to avow it. Lacerda the Jesuit in a note on Virgil, (Æn. vi. 230,) says, "Hence was derived "the custom of our holy church to provide purifying or "holy water at the entrance of the churches." (See note in loco.) Montfaucon says, the aquaminarium was a vase of holy water placed by the heathens at the entrance of their Temples to sprinkle themselves with. (See Antiq. t. ii. p. 1. l. iii. c. 6. and Europ. Ione. v. 96.) Crœsus gave two of these vessels to the Temple of Apollo at Delphos. (See Herodot. l. 1. 51. and Clem. Alex. Strom. l. 1.) Indeed, the Heathens' custom of sprinkling was so essential a part of all their religious offices, that their mode of excommunication was by forbidding offenders the use of the holy water. (See Æschin. Orat. contr. Ctesiphon 58.) The very composition of the holy water was also the same among the

pagans as among the papists, being simply a mixture of salt with common water. (Theocritus 95; Durant de Rit. l. i. c. 21.) The form of the sprinkling brush, (the aspersorium,) which is much the same with what the priests now use, may be seen in bas-reliefs and ancient coins, wherever the insignia or emblems of the pagan priesthood appear. (See Montfaucon's Antiq. t. ii. p. 1. l. iii. c. 6. and Agostini's Discorso sopra le Medaglie.) Platina in his Lives of the Popes, and other authors, ascribe the institution of holy water to pope Alexander I. who lived about one hundred and thirteen years after Christ; but it could not have been introduced so early, since we find the primitive Fathers, some ages after, treating it as a custom purely heathenish, and condemning it as impious and detestable; one of them in particular observing, that "it was invented by the "devil, in imitation of the true Baptism signified by the "prophets, in order that their votaries might also have "their pretended purifications by water." (Justin. Martyr. Apol. 1. p. 91.) The heathen Emperor Julian, in opposition to the Christians, used to order the victuals in the markets to be sprinkled with holy water, with a view of either starving them, or obliging them to eat what by their own principles they esteemed polluted. (See Hospinian de orig. Templor. l. ii. c. 25.) Hence we may see what opposite opinions the primitive Church, and the Romish Church, have entertained on holy water. The early Christians condemned it as superstitious, abominable, and heathenish; the Roman Catholics adopt it, as highly conducive to Christian piety: the first Christians esteemed it a contrivance of the devil to delude mankind: the Romish Church regards it as a security against the delusions of the devil. The absurdity of this ceremony may appear from the long enumeration which may be found in many Popish writers, of the virtues and benefits derived from its use, both to the soul and body: (See Durant de Ritib. l. i. c. 21; and Hospinian, ibid. &c.) while, to complete this absurdity, a long roll of miracles is produced to attest the certainty of the several virtues ascribed to it. See

Durant de Rit. l. i. c. 21.) The remark, therefore, of Ovid, upon the error of paganism on the subject of holy water, applies with equal force to the delusion of Popery on the same point:—

> "Ah nimium faciles, qui tristia crimina cædis
> "Fluminеâ tolli posse putetis aquâ!" OVID, Fast. 2. 45.

Holy water was also used at the heathen funerals, as it is now at the popish funerals. (See Kennett's Rom. Antiq. p. 358; and Virg. Æn. 6.)

> "Socios purâ circumtulit undâ!"

The Romish Church, however, proceeds much farther than the heathens in the use of holy water, since there is a yearly festival in Rome peculiarly devoted to the purifying or blessing of horses, asses, and other cattle, vulgarly called the Benediction of Horses, which is celebrated with much solemnity, in the month of January, when all the inhabitants of the city and neighbourhood send their horses, asses, &c. to the convent of St. Anthony, near the church of St. Mary the Great, where a priest in his surplice, at the church door, sprinkles, with his brush, all the animals singly, as they are presented to him. The advantage derived by the animals, on this occasion, may probably be about the same as accrues to their owners; but the priest, at all events, does not lose his reward, since there is a gratuity of *tant par tête* payable for his zeal and ability. (See Middleton's letter; Rom. Modern. Giorn. 6. c. 46; Rione de Monti, and Mabillon's Iter. Ital. p. 136.) Dr. James Edward Smith also notices this gross abomination of modern heathenism (of which he was an eye witness) in the following terms: "On the 17th of Jan. being St. "Anthony's day, we witnessed the ceremony of blessing all "the horses, asses, and mules in the town, which were led, "decked out with ribbands, to one of the doors of the "church of this saint, where a priest stood ready to "sprinkle them with holy water: some of these animals "took it with much greater devotion than others, who

"seemed much frightened at the holy sprinkling. This
"is performed every year, and the Doge is always pre-
"sent—a laudable co-operation of church and state, who
"wisely keep one another in countenance in this holy
"and beneficial ceremony." (See his Tour to the Continent, vol. i. p. 258.) The only thing in heathen antiquity which appears to resemble this custom is, the sprinkling their horses with water in the Circensian games: (see Rubenii Elect. 2. 18:) but it is not clear whether superstition dictated that usage in order to purify them (the races being esteemed sacred) or merely to prepare them for the physical exertion of the race. The ingenuity of the Romish priests, however, in converting so coarse a modification of superstition into the means of their support, is sufficiently remarkable.

LETTER II.

On the Lights burnt in Pagan and Papal Temples; and the Votive offerings of Heathenism and Popery.

The Lamps and Candles burning in Catholic Churches and Chapels in broad Daylight, afford another example of heathen conformity. Mabillon observes on this custom, in his It. Ital. p. 25; but every one has witnessed its frequency. Now the perpetual lamps and candles of the heathen worship are constantly adverted to by their authors, as burning before the altars and statues of their Deities, as they now do before the shrines and images of the Romish superstition; (See Plin. Hist. Nat. l. xxxiv. 3. Cic. in Verr. 2. Virg. Æn. 4 –200.) Herodotus states that the Egyptians, who first introduced the use of lights into their idolatrous temples, (Clem. Alex. Strom. l. i. c. 16,) had a grand yearly festival, called, from its chief business, *the lighting up of candles:*

(Herod. l. ii. 62. Lond. edit.:) but there is scarcely a single festival of Papal Rome to which this phrase might not be justly applied. The primitive Christians exposed the folly and absurdity of this heathenish custom, little dreaming that their successors would adopt it. (Hospin. de Orig. Templor. l ii. 22.) "They light up candles to "God," says Lactantius, speaking of the heathens, "as if "he lived in the dark: but do not they deserve to rank as "madmen who offer lamps to the Author and Giver of "light?" In the old heathen inscriptions are many instances of presents of lamps and candlesticks from individuals to the temples and altars of them that were no gods. (See Grut. Inscr. 177, 3.) This practice continues in modern Rome, where each church abounds with lamps of massy silver, and sometimes of gold, the gifts of princes and others. The principal saints and miraculous images of popish countries have lamps perpetually burning before them, as St. Anthony of Padua, St. Charles Borromeo of Milan, and the Lady of Loretto; and the votaries of less distinguished places of worship are lighted in like manner to their devotions, in the broad blaze of each day's sun, by humble ends of holy candle, stuck about the altars of the several chapels and oratories, in honour of the particular saint whose image is there set up, and before which images they are found duly prostrating themselves, with all the ceremonies of a more ancient form of worship. A man has only to cross over from Dover to Calais to witness this mummery in perfection. "They light them candles, yea "more than for themselves, whereof they" (the idols) "cannot see one." (Baruch, ch. vi. v. 19.) "The super-"stitious use of lights in the church by day, is an affront "done both to the Sun in the heaven, and to the Sun of "Righteousness in the Church." (*Archbishop Leighton's Lustre of the Church.*) A reference to the first letter will show that the idolaters of China are lighted to their devotions at the present moment, precisely in the same way.

THE OFFERINGS AND VOTIVE GIFTS HUNG UP IN CATHOLIC PLACES OF WORSHIP, IN GRATITUDE FOR DE-

LIVERANCES FROM DANGER AND CURES IN SICKNESS, may be identified with the votive offerings of the heathens in their temples on similar occasions. No practice was more common among the Pagans, as the classical reader will well know. (See Montfauc. Antiq. t. ii. p. 1, l. iv. c. 4, Hor. passim, &c.) Their original donaria, or votive offerings, are preserved to this hour in the cabinets of the curious; and in the British museum are various figures of eyes, feet, hands, breasts, and other parts of the body, formerly hung up in the heathen temples, in testimony of cures supposed to be performed by their tutelar deities in those particular parts; but the most common of the offerings were pictures representing the history of some miraculous cure or deliverance vouchsafed upon the vow of the donor. For a remarkable example, take Tibullus:—

> "Nunc, Dea, nunc succurre mihi, nam posse mederi
> "Picta docet templis multa tabella tuis."—El. 1, 3.

It may be true, that the infidels of antiquity ridiculed this practice of heathenism, as the infidels of France ridiculed the absurdities of Popery; but it is equally true, that the practice itself prevailed in both cases, and is a constituent part of each religion. Cicero relates, that a friend of Diagoras the philosopher once said to him in a temple, "You who think the gods take no notice of human affairs, do not you see by this number of pictures, how many people, for the sake of their vows, have been saved in storms at sea, and got safe into harbour?"—"Yes," said Diagoras, "I see how it is; for those persons are "never painted who happened to be drowned." (Cic. Nat. Deor. l. iii. 253.) The temples of Æsculapius were more especially rich in these offerings, which Livy says, were "the price and pay for the cures that he had wrought for "the sick." (Liv. l. xlv. 28.) Here they used always to hang up in tables of brass or marble, a list of all the miraculous cures which that Deity was supposed to have performed. (See Strabo, t. i. 515.) A remarkable fragment of one of

these tables still exists, and the inscription is recorded by Gruter. (See his Inscript., p. 71.) It was found in the ruins of one of his temples at Rome; and Montfaucon observes upon it, that "it proves either the artifice of the "devil to deceive the credulous, or else the tricks of the "Pagan priests, by suborning men to counterfeit diseases "and miraculous cures;" (see Montf. Antiq. t. ii. p. 1, l. iv. c. 6;) a remark equally applicable to the pretended miracles of modern, as of ancient Rome. Now this piece of superstition had been found much too profitable to the heathen priesthood to be overlooked by the Romish clergy, and was, therefore, engrafted upon the worship of Popery, and reigns at this hour in as full vigour as in the ages of Pagan idolatry. This superstition was so gross, as to disgust some of their own communion. Polydore Virgil, after describing this practice of the heathens, observes, "In "the same manner do we now offer up in our churches little "images of wax; and when any part of the body is hurt, as "the hand or foot, we make a vow to God, or to one of his "saints, to whom, on our recovery, we offer that hand or "foot in wax, which custom is now come to that extrava-"gance, that we do the same thing for our oxen, horses, and "sheep!" (Pol, Virg. de Inv. Rer. l. v. i.) Baronius observes, that "the altar of St. Philip Neri shines with votive "pictures and images, the proofs of as many miracles, receiv-"ing every day the additional splendour of fresh offerings "from those who have been favoured with fresh benefits," (Baron. Ann. 1. An. 57, v. 162; It. Aring. Rom. Subter. l. 1. c. 30.) Among these votaries, a late Pope offered a yearly acknowledgment to this saint, for a miraculous deliverance which he fancied he had obtained through his invocation.. It would be endless to enumerate the patron saints of the late Pope; but from his revival of the holy office of the Inquisition, and the unholy order of Jesuits,*

* The "History of the Jesuits," lately published, (but now, I believe, with difficulty to be obtained,) proves that this order is only a corrupt modification of the Papal system, and that its members have ever been

it is generally supposed, that he considers himself mainly indebted to Saint Dominic, and Saint Ignatius, and that he has taken the most effectual method of discharging his per-

the most active agents of the Romish church, and have most effectually forwarded its designs upon the happiness and liberties of mankind, in furtherance of which objects, they have not scrupled to employ PERSECUTION, in all its forms, both civil and religious. It is further proved, that the Jesuits at this time occupy a very strong position in the centre of this Protestant country—the College of Stonyhurst, near Preston—which is in constant communion and correspondence with another Jesuits' College in Ireland, and with the Continent at large.—That the constitution and rules of the society sanction practices opposed to the dictates of religion, and hostile to the safety of sovereigns and governments.—That in the two centuries of their existence, the Jesuits were the authors of almost all the calamities which desolated the world at large, and Europe in particular, especially the Protestant part of it.—That, to doctrines of the most pernicious tendency, both in morals and politics, they added practices, in each, of a nature utterly indefensible.—That the agents employed by them in the prosecution of their objects have been, almost exclusively, members of the Romish communion, who have ever been their willing instruments, and that inasmuch as the concessions of the late reign (especially the grant of the elective franchise) have greatly increased the number and influence of Roman Catholics, both in England and Ireland, the connexion which has always subsisted between the Jesuits and themselves assumes the more importance, and threatens the greater danger to a Protestant nation and government.—That the circumstance of the Jesuits having now established themselves in such force amongst ourselves, is part of the system of achieving by fraud what cannot be effected by force.—That numerous converts from the Protestant to the Romish communion have been already made in our own country through the indefatigable activity of these agents; and that the work of conversion is proceeding with remarkable success at this moment, more particularly in the inland counties: and finally, that the late Pope, in reviving an Order which was abolished by Pope Clement XIV. on the supplication of the whole of Europe, (both Catholic and Protestant,) and in assigning to it, at the same time, the aid of the INQUISITION, (its oldest and best ally,) has himself acted upon the great principle of Jesuitism, viz. that the end to be accomplished will sanction the means which may be used, and has effectually provided for the revival of all those moral and political evils which are inseparable from the employment of such agents. Notwithstanding these facts, Mr. CHARLES BUTLER, in his last work, eulogized this Order in

sonal obligations at the expense of the whole civilized world—a mode of evincing his gratitude not quite so harmless as that adopted by the late king of Sardinia, who was content to display his sense of piety, merely by assuming the habit of St. Ignatius, a taste in which his Majesty might, perhaps, have been much more safely indulged.

LETTER III.

The Votive Offerings of Heathenism and Popery.

[CONTINUED.]

A FEW more words on the VOTIVE OFFERINGS of Popery, as allied to those of heathenism. I have before adverted to Calais as presenting a good specimen near home, of the profusion of lights burning in broad day on the altars of their saints. The rude pictures of the poor misguided fishermen in the churches of Calais, in honour of the Virgin Mary, furnish a fine example of votive offerings. Indeed, the Virgin Mary seems to have done wonders in this way; so that what Juvenal said of the goddess Isis may be applied to her, that the painters get their livelihood out of her.

"Pictores quis nescit ab Iside pasci?"

These donaria, or votive offerings of Popery, are generally close copies of their heathen originals: in each case the vow is said to be divinely inspired, or expressly commanded, and the cure or deliverance is stated to have been wrought either by the visible appearance, and immediate hand, of

the highest terms, and publicly stood forth as its champion, in defiance of the clearest case of moral and political turpitude ever established; indeed the Roman Catholics at large (as might have been expected) have pursued the same course, and have thus identified themselves with the same system.

the tutelar saint, (a gross delusion,) or by the notice of a dream, or other miraculous intimation from Heaven. "There can be no doubt," says one of their celebrated writers, "but that the images of our saints often work "signal miracles by procuring health to the infirm, and by "appearing to us often in dreams to suggest something of "great moment for our service. (Durant de Ritib. l.i. c.5.) Now the same effects precisely were ascribed by the ancient Pagans to their deities as are referred by the Papists to their saints—nay, even to the images of those saints; which latter appears a more rank form of superstition than abounded anciently. A comparison of the inscriptions in Gruter, and other records of antiquity, with those in the churches of Italy and other Romish countries, will place this matter beyond all doubt. These offerings, however, are not confined to the poor, the vulgar, and the ignorant. The gifts and offerings of the wealthy and the noble, in vessels, lamps, statues, and jewellery, rival those of heathen devotees. The altar of St. Thomas à Becket formerly, the shrine of the Virgin Mary at Loretto, and elsewhere, now, and indeed the actual contents of almost every Romish church which has escaped the plunder of the French and Italian revolution, bear ample testimony on this point. The splendour of the Romish shrines has passed into a proverb; and a woman dressed out in all her finery is, by a well-known French phrase, said to be decked like a shrine (*parée comme une Chasse*). Now, what is the church of Loretto, but the counterpart of Apollo's temple at Delphos? (See Hom. Il. 9. 404; see also Liv. l. 40, 37, as to the temple of Æsculapius.) There is even a resemblance between the ancient and modern temples in their very furniture and appendages, for each have their wardrobes: the changes of dress for a single Romish priest are sufficiently numerous and puzzling, but those of his Holiness (the great high priest of all the modern temples) are almost innumerable. One part of the treasury of the holy house of Loretto consisted of its wardrobes; and so, as Tertullian observes, the idols of antiquity used to be dressed out in

curious robes of the choicest stuffs and fashions. (De Idolat. p. 116. edit. Rigalt.) The classical traveller, on being shown at Loretto the great variety of costly habits, some embroidered by queens and princesses, and others bristling with jewels for the use of the miraculous image of our Lady, will at once be reminded of Queen Hecuba of Troy, prostrating herself before the miraculous image of Pallas, with a present of the best and richest gown of which she was mistress, as described by Homer, Il. 293. The modern devotees of the church of Rome fall not a whit behind those of heathen times; nor has the pious monarch, mentioned in my last, as having assumed the habit of St. Ignatius, displayed a more remarkable example of attachment to the church of Rome, than a certain sagacious monarch of modern times, who has given undoubted testimony of his piety and gallantry at the same moment, by actually working with his own hands a petticoat for the use of the Virgin Mary! It is impossible to refer to these "dark places of the earth" without adverting to a remarkable edict of the Spanish Inquisition, dated Madrid, April 5, 1815, entitled, "The Edict of the Most Excellent Lord Inquisitor General, "Don Francisco y Campillo," and which is stated in detail in the introduction to the History of the Jesuits before noticed. Under that decree, all those heretics (or Protestants) who did not abjure their religion, and embrace Popery, within one year from its date, were rendered amenable to all the terrors of imprisonment, confiscation, and death; a fact sufficiently characteristic of the implacable hostility of the Romish church, which (to use the language of the author of that history) "has in the very instant of her exaltation "and revival, through the instrumentality of Protestant exertions, rewarded the Protestant church and cause by the "foulest ingratitude, and the most atrocious persecution." If, in spite of the tremendous visitations of Europe, her monarchs are rendered no wiser by their misfortunes, and if the result of all the efforts which have been made in the cause of regal legitimacy, be only to confirm the empire of ignorance, and to consolidate the power of superstition, may

it not be feared that the exhausted nations of the earth have yet much to endure before the general tranquillity can be permanently secured? The lavish expenditure of Protestant blood and treasure which we have witnessed, has indeed had the desirable effect of restoring ancient establishments to the seats from which they had been hurled by usurpation; and so far, every friend of law and order must rejoice; but if in propping, or setting up, ancient governments, we shall find no better reward for our toil than the poor consolation of having deposed a usurper, in favour of a bigot, and obtained a religious, instead of a political dynasty, it may be doubted whether the interests of religion, or humanity, will have gained much by the change. The first return which was made by the late Pope for the restoration of his power by Protestants, was to restore the order of Jesuits which was originally formed for the avowed object of opposing the Protestant reformation, and had continued, down to the period of its suppression, the great engine of the Romish church in persecuting Protestants: his next step was the express prohibition of the Bible in the vulgar tongue, and its general distribution in any tongue; an act of such direct hostility to the whole Protestant world, and to this nation in particular, that it is only astonishing how, after such a measure, Popery could find defenders among those who bear the name of Protestants. It is under the same auspices that the Inquisition has reared its blood-stained head; and who that has any proper feeling, either for the religious or civil liberties of mankind, will contend, that England in particular, or the world at large, has any reason for congratulation upon the re-establishment of that odious engine of oppression and wrong? While such a policy is to prevail (and only such an one will prevail wherever Popery has power) it becomes very problematical whether the influence which England has honourably exerted in establishing rightful authorities, has not unwittingly had an injurious and adverse tendency in enabling a church against whose corruptions she has always protested, to set up her old idolatries, and to establish her ancient empire over

the consciences and persons of men. At all events, this remark may not be without its use, in the way of caution against further concessions nearer home. To revert to the more immediate subject of this Letter—the Votive Gifts of Popery—who can doubt that votive gifts to saints are a pollution of the holy name of God, when he reads—" Pollute ye my holy name no more with your GIFTS and with your idols?" (Ezek. xx. 39.)

LETTER IV.

On the Alliance between the Deities of Paganism, and the Saints of Popery.

The subject of votive offerings to the deities of paganism, and the saints of popery, naturally involves the consideration of THE ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE OBJECTS OF WORSHIP IN ONE AND THE OTHER SYSTEM, where a close similarity will appear. The *Dii Tutelares* of the ancient idolaters, to whom the defence of certain countries was committed, such as Belus among the Babylonians and Assyrians, Osiris and Isis among the Egyptians, and Vulcan among the Lemnians, are rivalled by those tutelary saints of the papacy who are supposed to defend particular nations. There is not a nation where popery is the religion of the state, which is without its patron saint; but as there is a fashion in most things, and as novelty has peculiar charms, we find our old friends, the French, of late years rather unceremoniously deserting their long-tried patron St. Louis, in favour of an illustrious infant; an event announced to France and the world by the prelate who presided at that infant's funeral, at St. Denis, in the following terms:—" Mademoiselle, regenerated by the waters of baptism, is " henceforth *the angel of our country;* an angel who,

"united in Heaven with the saints of her family, will *gain* "*for herself, and draw down upon us, the benediction of* "*the Lord.*" Thus also the *Dii Præsides* of the heathen idolaters, to whom the protection of certain cities was committed, as Apollo at Delphos, Minerva at Athens, Juno at Carthage, and Quirinus at Rome, are closely copied by the patron saints of the Romish cities, there being hardly one without its saint or good angel, as St. Firmin at Amiens, who walked miraculously with his head in his hand some hours after it had been cut off; or St. Januarius at Naples, whose blood still liquefies when his beloved city is in danger, and the appearance of whose image, or idol, borne by the priests in public processions, never fails to stop the eruption of even so unruly a neighbour as Mount Vesuvius itself. Again, the *Dii Patroni* of heathenism, whose office was to preside over the temples and altars, as Jupiter in the Capitol, Venus in the temple of Paphos, and Diana in that of Ephesus, are followed by the patron saints of Anti-Christ; as in England, our Lady of Walsingham, and our Lady of Ipswich once existed, precisely as our Lady of Loretto is now familiar to Italy, or as Diana-Coriphea, Diana-Ephesia, Venus-Cipria, and Venus-Paphia, were once familiar to heathenism; and thus also, as the sea and land, the fire and air, and other created objects, had anciently their deities, as Neptune, Triton, Vulcan, &c., so now these natural objects have their saints, as St. Christopher, St. Clement, St. Agatha, &c.; nay, even diseases are honoured by the Papists with special saints as gods for the cure of them, as St. Cornelius for the falling-sickness, and St. Appollin for the tooth-ache, &c., in opposition to the divine declaration—"See now that I, even I, am he; and "there is no God with me; I kill, and I make alive; I "wound and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver "out of my hand." (Deut. xxxii. 39.) Should it be urged in defence of a system which thus robs God of his honour, that the saints are not so properly considered objects of worship, as they are the intercessors between God and man, it may be answered, that the Pagans had thus their *Dii Me-*

dioximi,* whom they also regarded as intermediate intercessors between the Deity and themselves; an error which, although not without its excuse with them, has no apology among those upon whom the light of the gospel has shone, and who are, by such a practice, effectually invalidating and rejecting the revelation of that Divine Personage who is expressly declared, in the scriptures of truth, to be the one and only Mediator between a holy God and his guilty creatures.

It is thus also that the *rural deities* of the ancient Romans have been copied by their successors of the Romish church. These formerly presided over the roads, streets, and highways, and were entitled, *Viales*, *Semitales*, and *Compitales*. Sometimes their little temples, or altars, but still more frequently their rude statues, appeared in the public ways, and travellers used to step aside and pay their devotions at these rural shrines, and solicit a prosperous journey and safe return.

"Invoco vos, Lares viales, ut me bene juvetis." PLAUT. MERC. 5. 2.

(See also Apulei Florid. 1.) Now this custom is still common in most popish countries, but especially in Italy, where the old *Hecate in triviis* is replaced by the *Maria in triviis*; and in passing along the road, it is common to see travellers, on their knees, before these rustic altars, which none ever presume to approach without some act of reverence, and even those who are most in haste, or who pass at a distance, are sure to cross themselves, and pull off their hats in token of their devotion. In the same way, wooden crosses frequently appear to invite the same genuflections and prostrations; and the poor unenlightened postilions would think they deserved to be murdered before the end of their journey, if they should omit the accustomed acts of piety prescribed by their priests, those "blind leaders of the blind." It is evident that all the multiplication of saints which has been noticed in this Letter bears a close affinity to the Polytheism of the heathens, the only

* "At ita me Di, Deæq. superi atque inferi, et *Medioximi*."—Plautus Cistellaria, A. 2. s. 1.

difference being, that paganism had avowedly many gods, which the Romish faith has also, but without calling them by the same name. The polite but profligate city of Athens was so full of gods, that a witty philosopher observed it was easier to find a god there than a man; and thus the endless profusion of saints in the Romish church has followed close upon antiquity, all of which saints not only worked miracles while they lived, (or they could not have been admitted as saints by the Romish church,) but their very relics, pictures, and statues, work miracles now they are dead, while they themselves are expressly made the objects of prayer, which no created being can be, without gross idolatry in the worshipper. "Sancte Ursula, ora pro nobis:" What is this but first to pray to a saint to pray to God for the devotee?

Indeed, every where through Italy we see their sacred inscriptions breathing the pure spirit of Paganism, and ascribing the same powers, characters, and attributes to their saints, as were formerly ascribed to the heathen gods, as the few following specimens will evince:—

PAGAN INSCRIPTIONS.	POPISH INSCRIPTIONS.
Mercurio et Minervæ Diis Tutelarib.	Maria et Francisce Tutelares mei.
Dii Qui Huic templo Praesident.	Divo Eustorgio Qui Huic templo Praesidet.
Numini. Mercurii Sacr.	Numini. Divi Georgii
Herculi. Victori. Pollenti. Potenti. Invicto.	Pollentis. Potentis. Invicti.
Praestiti Jovi S. Diis. Deabus Que. Cum. Jove.*	Divis Praestitibus Juvantibus. Georgio, Stephanoque Cum Deo opt. Max.*

* Gruter Corp. Inscript. p. 50. It. Cic. Or. pro Lege Man. 15. It, Grut. p. 54. It. p. 50. It. p. 22. It. ib. p. 2.

* Vid. Boldonii Epigraphica, p 439. It. p. 348. It. p. 422. It. p 649.

LETTER V.

On the Conformity between Heathen Deification, and Romish Canonization.

THE observation in the conclusion of the last letter respecting the miracles which it is necessary for the saints in the church of Rome to have worked, before they can be canonized, or beatified, suggest the propriety of noticing THE CONFORMITY BETWEEN HEATHEN DEIFICATION AND ROMISH CANONIZATION. The ancient priests, in order to the credit of their system, felt it necessary to persuade the people, that certain characters, many of whom had, however, been the most ambitious and sensual of mankind, were honoured by the especial favour of Heaven; were deep in its mysteries, and even worthy of being placed among the gods themselves; in consequence of which, their public deification took place, with all "the pomp and circum-"stance" so well calculated to impose upon a gross and idolatrous people. In order, however, to this ceremony, some miraculous intimation of the favour and will of Heaven as to the individual in question was necessary, which was duly attested, as essential to the ceremony. Thus, in the case of Romulus, one Julius Proculus took a solemn oath, "That Romulus himself appeared to him, and ordered him "to inform the senate of his being called up to the assem-"bly of the gods, under the name of Quirinus," (Plut. in Vit. Rom. Dyonis. Halicar. l. 2. p. 124,) and in the deification of the Cæsars (some of whom were little less than monsters) the established proof of their divinity was an eagle flying out of the funeral pile towards heaven, which was supposed to convey the soul of the deceased, and was also required to be duly attested. (Dio Cass. p. 598, 842.) The Papists, in imitation of this Pagan original, consider it necessary to their credit, to canonize or beatify certain

individuals of their communion; (some of whom have, like their heathen prototypes, been of infamous and scandalous lives;) and in order to this act, they also introduce the machinery of miracles, although with some difference as to the mode of its operation. In this case, the miracles are alleged to have been performed by the saints themselves, and there is as little difficulty in procuring the necessary attestations in modern, as in ancient Rome. The creation of saints has in consequence become almost as common as that of cardinals, there having rarely been a Pope who did not enrich the calendar with some fresh specimens. Benedict 13th canonized eight in one summer, and his successor, Clement 12th, four more. Innocent 13th, who succeeded him, beatified Andrew Conti, a member of his own family: and this is another main source of saintship when, to gratify the ambition of the reigning Pope, this honour is conferred on some of his name or family. The late Pope canonized five saints, all of whose banners are at this moment waving in a chapel of St. Peter's. The Papists consider this rite as so essential a part of their religion, that they have even perverted the sacred scriptures, for the purpose of giving sanction to the practice, having translated the passage of St. James, v. 11, not as it ought to be: "Behold how we count them happy which endure," but "Behold how we *beatify* those who have suffered with constancy;" in like manner as, in order to give a sanction to their religious processions with the host and with relics, &c. they translate the passage in Heb. xi. 30—"The walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days," "after a *procession* of seven days." And as they render the 21st verse of that chapter, instead of "Jacob worshipped, leaning upon *the top* of his staff," "Jacob worshipped the top of his staff;" which the learned rabbins of the church of Rome explain by supposing some visible representation, worthy of divine worship, to have been on the staff, in order to justify their own worship of almost any thing, and every thing, except the proper object of adoration. It costs an immense sum to be made a saint,

but pious relatives are sometimes content to bear it. Proof of the miracles wrought by the deceased must be adduced in due form, in a judicial way. Witnesses are examined, and, in order that full justice may be done, counsel are appointed on both sides; one undertaking to establish the miracles, and the other opposing them; and thus the matter is solemnly argued "*dans les formes, et selon les règles*," and not determined, until after a long and expensive process. It is further remarkable, that some miracle must have been performed by the deceased *after his death*, as well as during life; one of these by the way, being quite as easy to the saint as the other, and each being equally capable of proof. It is unnecessary to observe, that these judicial inquiries invariably terminate in favour of the saint and his family; since the Pope and his council are equally interested in the successful issue of the suit:—indeed, as an atheistical Pope once observed—"What a profitable fable is that of Jesus Christ to us!"

LETTER VI.

On the Alliance between the Image Worship of Heathenism and of Popery.

I WOULD next consider, somewhat more particularly, THE ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE IMAGE WORSHIP OF HEATHENISM AND THAT OF POPERY. Plato informs us, that there were images in the temples of Egypt, from the earliest antiquity. (Plat. de Legib. l. ii. p. 656. Max. Tyr. Diss. 38.) It appears evidently from Scripture, that they subsisted there as well as in Palestine, before the time of Moses; indeed, they owed their early introduction to the original apostasy of man, who no sooner departed from "the living God," than he displayed the depravity of his

nature, by "honouring and worshipping the creature, "more than the Creator;" by bowing down before them that were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone; that had eyes and saw not, ears and heard not, neither was there any breath in their nostrils. The natural reason of every man, when not perverted and debased by sin; and the plain testimony of his conscience, when not under a similar delusion, manifested sufficiently the folly and impiety of such conduct; but to leave him altogether without excuse, the written law of God was superadded to the common law of nature. By the law proclaimed at Sinai, the Almighty was revealed as the sole object of divine worship, and as a God jealous of his honour: man was expressly prohibited from making to himself "any "graven image, or any likeness of any thing in heaven "above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under "the earth," and from "*bowing down* himself to them, or "serving them." (Exod. xx. 4, 5.) This law, equally obligatory on Jew and Gentile, was never relaxed in any degree; and the peculiar test of true religion, which the rigid observance of the second commandment formed throughout the whole Jewish economy, is the strongest proof of the abhorrence in which idolatrous representations of every kind were held by the divine Lawgiver. Whatever was permitted to the Israelites, in condescension to their particular situation and circumstances, there was ever a stand made against the use of images, under whatever pretext; as a custom the most dangerous to the first principles of vital religion, as tending naturally to corrupt it, and as necessarily introducing superstition and idolatry into the worship and service of God. In this particular, the Almighty, speaking after the manner of men, in condescension to our infirmities, was pleased to declare himself A JEALOUS GOD; not only abhorring in his people the spiritual adultery of gross idolatry, but *jealous* and indignant at the exhibition of that sister evil which the use of images involved: in like manner as an earthly husband would not only expect his wife to abstain from actual crime, but would

find his *jealousy* excited, and his indignation kindled, by her showing those attentions to another, to which he alone possessed the just and rightful claim.

The use of images and pictures in the Christian church did not begin till the fourth century, when corruption in religion had everywhere shown itself. The Protestant historian, Dean Milner, mentions the zeal of Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus, in that century, " in tearing a painted " curtain which he saw in a place of public worship; " which seems" (says the historian) " at once a proof of " his detestation of pictures and images in religion, and " also of the weak beginnings of that superstition in the " fourth century." (See Hist. of Church of Christ, vol. ii. p. 300.) The same ecclesiastical historian also furnishes a sufficient refutation of the stale defence which has been always made of images or idols, and which defence will no doubt be repeated again—I mean—the plea that such things are only used to raise the mind of the worshipper to the Beings whom they represent. After noticing a letter of that arrogant and worldly-minded pontiff, Gregory III. written in the eighth century to the emperor, which contains this precise defence of images or idols, he observes, " A " pagan philosopher would have defended heathen idolatry " much in the same manner; and the dependence which " both the pagan and the papist place on the image, de- " monstrates that they imagine the power of the saint or " dæmon to be intimately connected with the image which " represents, as it were, the body, of which the object of " their worship is the soul; so justly do the Scriptures " describe idolaters as literally worshipping the works of " their own hands, and the man of sin as worshipping " dæmons. (1 Tim. iv.) Sophistry may evade, but it " cannot confute. When men cease to ' hold the head,' " and to be satisfied with Christ as their all, they fall " into these and similar errors. The heart which feels " not the want of the living God, as its proper nutriment, " will feed on the ashes of idolatry." (Vol. iii. 175.)

The christian emperors were so convinced of the con-

nexion subsisting between images, and the worship of them, that they strictly prohibited their pagan subjects, on pain of death, from lighting up candles, offering incense, or hanging up garlands to images, which external acts were then considered by the whole christian church as flagrant proofs of genuine paganism. (Vide Gothof. Comment. de statu Pagan. sub Christian. Imperatorib. leg. vi. p. 7.) They considered these images as senseless idols, the work of men's hands, and therefore unworthy of any honour; and all the instances and overt acts of such worship, as condemned by the law of Theodosius, are exactly the same with what the papists practise at this day; viz. lighting up candles, burning incense, and hanging up boughs and garlands. These laws even confiscated the house or land where any such acts of heathen superstition had been committed. (Ibid. leg. xii. p. 15.) The christian emperors, who no doubt acted under the advice of their bishops, did not think that paganism was abolished, as indeed it was not, until the use of images was utterly extirpated, this being always reckoned the chief of those heathen rites, which, in conformity with the sense of the purest ages of Christianity, are never mentioned in the imperial laws, without the epithets of "profane," "damnable," "impious," &c. (Ibid. leg. xvii. 20,) while the worshippers of such images are invariably considered by the primitive Fathers as heathens and pagans. (Pamphili Apol. pro. Orig. vid. Hieron. Op. tom. v. 233. Ed. Par.) What opinion then can be entertained of the Church of Rome, but that by a change only of the name, she has found means to retain the thing; and by substituting her saints in the place of the old deities, has set up idols of her own, instead of those of her forefathers? The professors of that corrupt religion have now the effrontery to make that the principal part of christian worship which the primitive Christians regarded as the worst part of paganism, and they even extract the most profitable revenue from a practice which, in the first ages of Christianity, would have cost a man both his life and estate.

The noblest heathen temple now extant is the Pantheon at Rome, which, as the inscription over the portico informs us, "having been impiously dedicated of old by "Agrippa to *Jupiter and all the Gods*, was piously con-"secrated by Pope Boniface the Fourth, *to the blessed* "*Virgin and all the Saints*." With this single alteration, it serves as exactly for all the purposes of the popish, as it did for the pagan worship, for which it was built: for as in the old pagan temple, every one might find the God of his country, and address himself to that deity to whose religion he was most devoted; so it is precisely, at this moment: every one chooses the patron saint whom he prefers, and the spectator may here behold different services going on at the same time, at different altars, with distinct congregations around them, just as the fancy and inclination of the different worshippers incline them to one or the other particular saint. It is difficult to say what better title the modern saints can show to the adoration now paid to them, than the old deities whose shrines they have usurped: for the religion of Christianity is as silent about the merits of the many thousand Romish saints as about those of pagan antiquity, and has no more prescribed divine honours to be paid to the one than to the other; nor is it easy to show how it can be less criminal to bow down before the images erected by the popes than to those which Agrippa or Nebuchadnezzar set up: the fables and falsehoods upon which such honours are claimed for the saints of popery, the greater part of whom were any thing else than saints while they lived, are of a nature to outrage all credibility, and to disgust every man who has not resolved to deliver up his reason, bound hand and foot to the high priests of popery, and to swallow the most monstrous and revolting absurdities, in obedience to their commands. As it is in the Pantheon, so it is in many other heathen temples which yet remain in Rome, where they have only pulled down one idol to set up another; and changed rather the name, than the object, of their worship. Of this, a variety of instances might be given;

but the most remarkable is that of the Temple of Romulus, built on the spot where he was supposed to be suckled by the wolf; and from which circumstance, the heathens regarded Romulus (after they had made him a god) as singularly propitious to the health and safety of young children, from which notion it became a practice for nurses, and mothers, to present their sickly infants before his shrine, in this temple, in confidence of a cure or relief. Now, when this temple was afterwards converted into a church, lest any piece of superstition should be lost, or the good Christians of modern Rome think themselves injured by the change, in losing such a protector for their children, care was taken to find out, in the place of the heathen god, a Christian saint, who had also been exposed in his infancy, and found by chance like Romulus, and so might be presumed to be quite as fond of children as their old deity. The worship of Romulus was therefore transferred to St. Theodorus: and children are presented at his shrine by their mothers and nurses, who sit with silent reverence before the altar of the saint, waiting for his miraculous influence on the health of the infant. (Rom. Modern. Giorn. T 2da c. 36. Rione di Ripa.) It is common, in these temples, to find the shrine of some ancient hero, filled by the meaner statue of some modern saint: while, in other instances, they have not even given themselves the trouble to make this change, but have been content to take up with the old image just as they found it, after baptizing or consecrating it anew, by the imposition of a christian name; as in the church of St. Agnes, the antique statue of a young Bacchus, with a little change of drapery, was afterwards worshipped under the title of that female saint. The famous statue of St. Peter, in his cathedral at Rome, is seated in a chair, and he holds a key in his hand—the well-known position of Jupiter; who however held a thunder-bolt. The history of this statue is rather curious: there were formerly two statues of Jupiter Capitolinus, one of stone, and the other of bronze. When Christianity succeeded to Heathenism, they put St.

Peter's head on the body of the stone statue, and gave him a pair of new hands, in one of which they placed a key; they then melted the bronze of the other statue of Jupiter, and recast it, after the fashion of the stone one, as altered; and so, as Horace says, "Mutato nomine, de te, fabula "narratur." In plain English—the worship went on quite as well to the modern apostle, as it had done to the ancient thunderer. In either case, the true God was neglected and forgotten, and an image was set up in his place, "which had eyes and saw not, and which had ears and "heard not, neither was there any breath in its nostrils."

LETTER VII.

A Refutation of the Papists' Assertion that Images are not Worshipped, but only used as Aids to Devotion.

IN pursuing the subject of THE IDOLATRY OF IMAGES, it is necessary to notice the denial of the papists, that they worship their images as gods, or believe that any divine power resides in them; and also their assertion, that they only employ these external memorials, as aids to the mind in devotion, and extending no further than may lead them to desire the prayers of those whom they represent. 1st. As to the belief of a divine power residing in the image, their celebrated writer Durant says, "There can be no "doubt but that the images of our saints often work "signal miracles, by procuring health to the infirm, and "appearing to us often in dreams, to suggest something "of great moment for our service." (De Ritib. l. i. c. 5.) Thus their votive inscriptions ascribe the power of healing diseases to their saints, as especially the following at Milan; "Divæ Savinæ Livia Euphemia in acerbo stomachi cru-

" ciatu opem nacta," precisely as the heathen inscriptions ascribe the same power to their deities. (See Gruter, pp. 48, 65.) There is a prayer in the Romish books of offices ordered by the rubric to be addressed to the sacred and miraculous picture of St. Veronica, couched in the following terms: " Conduct us, O thou blessed figure, to our " proper home, where we may behold the pure face of Christ." (See Conform. of Ancient and Modern Ceremonies, p. 158.) The miraculous images in every great town of Italy are erected into proper objects of divine worship by the blasphemous narrations which are reported of their divine power; their books testifying, their priests asserting, and their people believing, that several of these images have the power of locomotion, and have actually transported themselves from one place to another; have shed tears, and even blood; have spoken with audible voices, and wrought miracles; all which necessarily implies a power nothing short of Divine. The image of Loretto is fully believed to have been transported over vast oceans, and immense tracts of land, while the shops in Loretto are filled with crucifixes, Agnus Deis, and other popish trinkets, all accompanied by certificates of their having been *touched by the holy image*; thus evincing the general persuasion and belief, that some virtue is communicated by that touch, from a power residing in the image. In a church at Lucca is the image of the Virgin and Child; of which it is related, that an infidel threw a stone at the infant, but the Virgin, to save him from the blow, shifted him from one arm to the other, while the reprobate was swallowed up, and the hole is shown just before the altar of the image, enclosed by a grate; the Virgin received the blow on her shoulder, whence the blood issued, which is preserved in a bottle, and shown with the greatest ceremony, by the priest in his vestments, with tapers lighted, while all embrace the sacred relic on their knees.—Vide Wright's Travels at Lucca. Now what is this, but to attest the existence of an actual power in this idolatrous image, to defend itself from injury, and to avenge insult? The image or picture of St. Dominic of Surriano

is declared by their histories to have been brought down from heaven by the Virgin Mary, in person, and two other saints; and they affirm that, before this picture "great "numbers of the dead have been restored to life, and hun- "dreds from the agonies of death—the dumb, the blind, "the deaf, the lame, have been cured, and all diseases, and "mortal wounds miraculously healed." All which is attested by public notaries, and confirmed by cardinals, bishops, generals, and priors of that order; and all this is so generally believed, that from the 9th of July to the 9th of August (his anniversary festival) there have been counted above 100,000 pilgrims, (many of the highest quality,) who came from all parts of Europe to pay their devotions, and make their offerings, to this picture.—La Vie de St. Dominic, p. 599 and 602, edit. Paris. Is not this to insist on a divine power in this image or idol, which could have warranted the devotions of these worshippers? Aringhus says, "the images of the blessed Virgin shine "out continually by new and daily miracles, to the joy of "their votaries, and the confusion of opponents." And speaking of this picture, he says, "it is a most solid bul- "wark of the church of Christ, and a noble monument of "the pure faith of Christians against all the impious op- "ponents of *image worship*. It has more than once re- "moved itself from one place to another. The *worship*, "therefore, of this picture is become so famous through "all Christendom, that multitudes, to the number of "100,000 and upwards, resort annually to *pay their de- "votions* to it; and not only the original picture (made "not by human but by heavenly hands) is celebrated for "its daily miracles, but even the copy of it at St. Mary's "Monastery is famous for its perpetual signs and wonders "as the many votive offerings hanging round it, and the "bracelets and jewels which adorn it, testify." (Aring. Rom. Subter. tom. ii. p. 464.) Maldonat calls it an impious and absurd error of the Protestants to think that no religious worship is due to any but to God; and some of the Roman expurgatory indexes go so far as to expunge

those passages in the works of the primitive Fathers which teach that creatures ought not to be adored. (See Maldonat in Mat. v. 35, and Index Expurg. Madrid, 1612.) In the Liturgies, Missals, and Breviaries, published at Rome, by the highest authority, the Virgin Mary is called "the Mother of Mercy,"—"The Hope of the World,"—and "The only Trust of Sinners;" while the saints are addressed as "Intercessors,"—"Protectors,"—and "Givers of Grace." When the papists assert that they do not ascribe such miracles to any inherent power in the image, but to the power of God, who is moved to work them by the prayers and intercession of his saints, of whom these are the images, the answer is short and simple: the Bible no more recognises the virtue of the saints' prayers or intercession than it does the authenticity of their miracles; and to suppose that the Deity can be moved to exert his power for confirming such false and absurd stories of pictures and images sent down from heaven is arrant blasphemy, and only forged for purposes of lucre, and for the advantage of a church, which, by resorting to such artifices, most effectually proves her departure from the apostolic faith.

In the second place, if the argument that images are aids to the mind in devotion were admitted to sanction their use, the same argument would justify their use by the Heathens, who did not so worship the material image as not still to hold their deities whom those images represented, in still higher honour; and who, in point of fact, actually contended, as the papists do now, that the image was only an aid to their devotions. Let the early English Reformer Wickliffe be heard on this head—"We "worship not the image but the being represented by the "image, (say the patrons of idolaters in our times;) suffice "it to say, IDOLATROUS HEATHENS SAID THE SAME." Nothing indeed is more certain, than that the wiser Heathens always maintained that they did not give either to their inferior deities, or their idols, the worship proper to the Supreme Being; which is precisely what is asserted

by the papist when he supplicates the Virgin Mary, invokes the saints, and falls down before the images of one and the other: but inasmuch as the Almighty has declared, that all adoration of the creature is contrary to his will, and that he will both reject such worship, and destroy the worshipper, this is no other than the adoration of idolatry; however it may have answered the purpose of the priesthood to keep the world in darkness, as to its real nature, and its awful consequences. In like manner, the crime of the Jewish idolaters did not consist in their absolute rejection of the true God, but in bowing before other gods, and taking them into communion with himself; and their frequent defection into idolatry, was no other than their joining another worship to that of the God of Israel. They still held his religion to be true, and believed that Moses was divinely inspired; but, deluded by this intercommunity of gods, they came to regard the true God as a local, tutelary deity, precisely as the Romanists receive the God of the Scriptures in common with their own papal mythology of saints, or tutelary deities. (See Warb. Div. Leg. b. v. s. 2; Jurieu. Crit. Hist. v. 2, p. 3, c. 9; Mede's Apostasy, c. x. p. 651; Le Clerc on Acts, vii. 42; Macrob. l. iii. c. 9; De Evocandis Diis Tutelaribus; and Law's Theory of Rel. p. 92.) In St. Peter's at Rome, a foot of St. Peter's statue is almost worn away by the perpetual kisses of the devotees, who kneel and salute it whenever they pass. This act of devotion is that bowing down before an image which God has forbidden, nor can all the wit and wisdom of the conclave explain it away. Every act of the Romish church, in reference to its images, proves that it uses them for higher purposes than mere aids to devotion. Why else are they solemnly carried in procession, on occasions of great public calamity? Is there any charm in a block of wood, or stone, to produce rain at one time, or fine weather at another; to avert a pestilence, or stop a volcano? In the church of St. Mary of Impruneta, near Florence, is a miraculous picture of the Virgin Mary, held in the highest veneration through all Tuscany. When-

ever that state is involved in any peculiar danger, this idol is carried in procession through the streets of Florence, attended by the prince himself, with all the nobility, magistrates and clergy. To prove that this picture has never failed to afford relief, they produce various acts and records confirmed by public inscriptions, setting forth all the benefits obtained from each procession, and the several offerings made on that account to the sacred image. Among these inscriptions, one records the miraculous ceasing of a pestilence in Florence, after a three days' procession; and another inscription set up in their church, only a century since, has these words, "There is no one who can be saved, "O most Holy Virgin, but through thee; there is no "one who can be delivered from evils but through "thee; there is no one from whom we can obtain "mercy but through thee; Mary opens her bosom "of mercy to all, so that the whole universe receives "out of her fulness—the captive, redemption; the sick, "health; the afflicted, comfort; the sinner, pardon; the "just, grace; the angels, joy; the whole Trinity, glory!" (Vid. Memorie Istoriche della Miracolosa Immagine in Firen. 1714, 4to.) Such are the blasphemous ascriptions of deity offered by the church of Rome to a creature. No man can consider all this, and say, that either the Virgin, or her image, are merely used as aids to devotion. They are made the actual objects of that devotion; and when the Romish church can prove *from* Scripture that divine honours are prescribed to the Virgin, she may also prove that they are prescribed to her image. If, however, she shall produce tradition to prove either the one or the other, we reject the admissibility of such evidence, and protest against any deference to such authority; because, upon this principle, tradition may be made to sanction any thing else, which, in defiance of Scripture, is at present observed in that church.

The great fallacy of the argument of *antiquity*, both in the case of Images and of Purgatory, and indeed of all the other corruptions of the Romish church, is, that reference is invariably made to that period when the church having

apostatized from her first faith, had corrupted herself with idolatrous abominations; which, as they were wholly unknown to the primitive and apostolic age, form no part of genuine Christianity, and were renounced accordingly by Protestants at the Reformation. "Should any person," (says the protestant historian, Dean Milner,) "startle that I call "image worship by no better name than idolatry, and rank "pagan and papal practices in the same class, I would refer "such to the censure of St. Paul on the Galatians, iv. 8, "9. Idolatry being with them merely mental, originated "in a self-righteous principle; and the apostle looks on "them as worshippers of false gods, and informs them "that they were returning again to bondage. How much "more justly may image worship be called the doing ser- "vice to them which by nature are no gods, where the "idolatry is both mental and external!"—Dean Milner's History of the Church of Christ, vol. iii. p. 188. In conclusion, I would refer to the first Letter, where it is shown that the present practice of the idolaters of China is precisely similar to the practice of the church of Rome in worshipping pictures and idols, and in burning tapers and incense to them that are no gods.

LETTER VIII.

On the Alliance between the Artifices of the Pagan and Papal Priests in supporting the Credit of their Idols.

THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE INVENTIONS OF THE HEATHEN PRIESTS TO KEEP UP THE CREDIT OF THEIR DEITIES, AND THE INVENTIONS OF THE POPISH PRIESTS, FOR THE SAME PURPOSE, may be next considered. The evidence of all antiquity goes to show that the most improbable falsehoods were coined by the ancient priests in honour of their deities and idols. These were equally revolting to the natural reason of mankind, and to their daily

experience; but so necessary were they to the support of the old superstition, that the wiser Heathens justified them as pious frauds, even while they ridiculed their absurdity. See Polybius, (Hist. l. xvi. p. 732, edit. Casaub.) who determines that, "great allowance must be made for those "writers who invent miracles, and legends, to keep up the "devotion of the people." The occasion of his giving this opinion was, that the Bargelitæ fully believed that the image of Diana, being exposed to the air, could receive no injury either from snow or rain; which was also believed of the image of Vesta by the Jassians; both which miracles were recorded by their historians. Polybius intimates his own sense of such follies; and he instances another equally absurd, related by Theopompus, of Jupiter's temple in Arcadia, which was, that the bodies of those that were in it, never cast any shadows; notwithstanding all which, he insists that something of this kind must be resorted to, in order to keep alive the devotion of the people, provided it be kept within due bounds; the extent of which, however, he admits to be very difficult to determine. In like manner, the frauds of the heathen priests, in their various temples, and more especially at the celebrated oracles of Delphos, Dodona, and elsewhere, are universally known; no one of which delusions was believed by the priests themselves, but which they palmed upon the people in order to their own support; for had they only possessed the honesty of Demetrius, they must frankly have avowed with him—"Sirs, ye "know that by this craft we have our wealth," (Acts xix. 25.) Now the conformity between the priests in the Romish church and of heathenism is striking in this particular. It is well known that the Martyrologies, Lives and Acts of Saints, Breviaries, and Legends, contain relations which are calculated to outrage all belief, and to insult the common sense of all mankind; they are such as no man of education, or common sense, can possibly believe; and whoever opens, not only the ancient, but the modern Ecclesiastical Fables of the Church of Rome, must feel convinced that the priests themselves never could have believed such

falsehoods for an instant. I allude to such absurdities as men and women walking with their heads in their hands, casting out devils, flying in the air, walking on the sea, fasting for whole months, and in various other ways suspending or opposing the whole course of nature; which things Leslie, in his work on Deism, designates as "those "pious cheats which have bid the fairest of any one con-"trivance to overturn the certainty of the miracles of "Christ and his apostles, and the whole truth of the gos-"pel, by putting them all upon the same footing."* These

* The placing of the miracles of popery upon the same footing with those of the scripture, has nothing in it of novelty, for it has been refuted *usque ad nauseam.* To advert at present only to the evidence as to the miracles of the New Testament: the testimony upon which the miracles of Christ, and his apostles, are founded, is as infinitely superior to the evidence on which the miracles of popery rest, as the heaven is higher than the earth, as God is above man, or as divine inspiration is better than the pretence to it. Two things are necessary to give sufficient credibility in a testimony, viz. the actual knowledge, and undoubted fidelity of the witnesses. If they record that only of which they were certain witnesses, never give any suspicion of fraud or deceit, and produce the fullest attestations to their own fidelity, then it is unreasonable to disbelieve them. This is the case of those who recorded the miracles of our Saviour and his apostles—they either saw them wrought, or received them immediately from those who did—they published them in that age when they were capable of being disproved by all then living in the same places where they were wrought, and were avowed enemies of the persons who wrought them, and interested in discovering, for their own justification, the least fraud or imposture which might have been attempted: besides which, these witnesses voluntarily abandoned all hopes of worldly advantage, incurred the greatest danger in attesting all they affirmed, and finally laid down their lives to confirm the truth of their testimony. On the other hand, the great majority of the Romish miracles have been believed upon the credit of lying fables, and vague reports; the testimony of those who delivered them has been refuted by men of greater authority than themselves, and the most notorious forgeries and impostures have been discovered in such miracles—the persons relating them have found their own advantage in their being believed, and have never laid down their lives in support of them; on which accounts the attempt to assimilate the testimony of the primitive church, respecting the miracles of Christ and his apostles, to

falsehoods, however, were necessary to the support of a system of error, and we accordingly find the most eminent

that of the Romish miracles must at once fall to the ground. Her Breviaries, Lives of Saints, and Martyrologies declare that the house of Loretto was carried by angels from Nazareth to Dalmatia, and from Dalmatia to Loretto; that queen Lupa, in Spain, who prevented the burial of St. James at Compostella, was turned into a lamb, and her palace into a church: that in Toulouse, a German, who was hung, while on a pilgrimage to Compostella, was brought to life by that saint, after he had been dead thirty-six days, while another poor pilgrim had an ass lent him by the same saint, (who personally appeared to him) which carried him from Pampeluna to Compostella and back: that a captain fell to the bottom of the sea with armour on, but found St. James below, who helped him up; and another marine pilgrim was held above water by the hair of his head, by St. James, for three days; that a high tower, by his order, stooped to the ground, and let a man off without danger. Protestant readers should know that Pope Calixtus himself records these last five miracles, and asserts that the leaning tower story happened A. D. 1106. How do these things deserve to be compared with the miracles of Christ, and his apostles? In the church of St. Maximin in France is declared to be the vial into which St. Mary Magdalen put the blood of our Saviour, which visibly boils up every year on Good Friday. Cardinal Tolet affirms, that the skin of Christ performed splendid miracles; and although Ferrandus, the Catholic writer, admits that four nations contend they have the original, he accounts for that, by boldly affirming that it is multiplied by the omnipotent power of God, and really is in them all; which is quite as easy to believe as that the Sacramental bread, whenever, or wherever, eaten, is the actual and real body and blood of our Lord. Ferrandus, in like manner, instances the very same tears of Christ which the Virgin put into a vial, as being in two different places; and he defends the claim of Judæa, Italy, Spain and many parts of France, to the possession of the blessed Virgin's milk, precisely on the same principles. Spondanus declares, that at St. Denis are the hair and swaddling clothes of our Lord; and Molinœus affirms, that at Courchiverni, near Blois, is the breath of St. Joseph kept in a vial (which, it is to be hoped, was hermetically sealed;) but what are all these to the stories gravely told by Cressy the Catholic, (in his Church History,) of Justinian, who, after decapitation, walked with his head in his hands, over the sea to the port where a church is now built to his memory—of St. Osith, who also walked a quarter of a mile with her head in her hands—of St. Clarus, who, by the help of angels, first carried his head to a fountain, where

popish divines admitting, and many even justifying their use. Thus Ludovicus Vives admits, that "the lives of the saints are generally corrupted with abundance of lies, the writer recording, not what the saint did, but what he would have had him do;" and he honestly proceeds to condemn the practice. (See Lud. Vives de trad. Discip. l. 5.) Thus also Melchior Canus ("a prophet of their

he washed it, and then carried it a great while longer; after which he went straight to heaven (without any purgatory as it seems)—of St. Decumanus, whose body, after decapitation, without the help of his hands, united his head to it, and walked away to a clear fountain, where he used his hands to wash it quite clean! It would be easy to supply a volume of these *lies*, for, as Boileau says, I choose to call things by their right names—

"Je ne puis rien nommer, si ce n'est par son nom."

But I shall here content myself with asking, how such absurd legends as these can, in point of credibility, be compared with the miracles of Christ and his apostles? None will deny that there are some limits to be set to our belief of reports concerning miracles; for although the omnipotence of the Almighty has no bounds, yet we are not to suppose that He employs his power in all things, and at all times, and as often as the accredited guides of popery shall say he does. The raising of the dead and the curing of inveterate diseases are arguments of the divine power, and of the truth of the religion which they attest; but all that miracles could effect for the Christian revelation was done in the earliest age of the church, and therefore ceased with that age. If men will not receive the testimony which the first miracles supply, "neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." In being continued and repeated, they would be miracles no longer; and it has been merely to prove the infallibility of the Romish church, and to invest its standing priesthood with continued power over the consciences of men, that such a church has found it necessary to hoodwink the world with such gross delusions as she has ever practised. Hence I conclude that the argument drawn from the power of God is inapplicable to the case in hand; and that to justify the foolish, extravagant, and wicked falsehoods which are current in the Romish church, is nothing less than to make God at once the patron of error, and the author of sin—to erect human tradition above divine revelation—and to prove, beyond contradiction, that the language of the apostle, when he speaks of "signs," "lying wonders," and "strong delusion," is strictly and properly applicable to the church of Rome.

own") observes, "the lives of the heathen philosophers are "more faithfully written by Laertius than the lives of the "saints by Christians; and Suetonius has recorded the "lives of the Cæsars, with more honesty and integrity, "than the Catholics have done those of virgins, martyrs, "and confessors;" after which, he charges, not their meaner historians only, but their most grave writers, with following uncertain reports, "yielding to the desires of "the people, whom they found fond and greedy of these "miracles, and reporting such as they did not believe "themselves, that they might not be wanting to the pious "desires of the people;" in other words, telling lies to please them. (See Melch. Can. loc. Theol. l. xi. c. 6.) In like manner, Petrus Damianus observes, that "there "were some who thought they honoured God by inventing "falsehoods to extol the virtues of his saints;" although, he adds, "God does not stand in need of our lies." (See Pet. Damiani, Vit. St. Romualdi.) While Gerson, on the other hand, like a true son of the church, affirms that "the "end of legends and miracles, of visions and revelations of "the saints, is to stir up the piety of the people; and it is "no matter," says he, "if some things that are really false "are piously believed, so that they be not believed *as* "false, or known to be false, at the same time"—a precious piece of casuistry! (Gerson Declar. Veritatum, tom. i. p. 415.) Lyra also notices the same deceptions (in c xiv. Dan.;) and Cajetan, in a discourse addressed to Pope Leo X. and prepared for the Lateran Council, expressly adverts to the same practices. To these testimonies may be added that of Launoy, who informs us that he was "so "far from receiving thanks for exposing the artifices and "impostures of the monks, that many referred him to "Polybius, to prove the lawfulness of resorting to fraud, "in order to recommend religion;" that is, they referred him to heathen authority, to prove the lawfulness of doing evil that good may come; a principle upon which the church of Rome has unblushingly acted from her earliest history. (See Launoy de Cura Eccles. pro venerat. Sanct.

art. xxx. coroll. 1.) It will be observed, that I have here chosen to advert only to the Romish writers themselves as the least exceptionable testimony; but I think, on comparing the evidence which they afford as to the intentional frauds of popery, with the delusions practised by the heathen idolaters, the most superficial observer will perceive a remarkable and extraordinary coincidence.

LETTER IX.

On the Conformity between the Prodigies of Heathenism and the Miracles of Popery.

I PROPOSE to follow up the last letter by exhibiting, somewhat more in detail, THE ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE PRODIGIES OF HEATHENISM AND THE MIRACLES OF POPERY. Livy observes of heathen Rome, that her miracles were always multiplied, in proportion to the disposition of the credulous to swallow them. (Liv. l. 24, 10.) And abundant proof has appeared in the preceding letter, that the priests of modern Rome display the same talent at forging their holy impostures, and even justify the fraud upon principle. First, as to *celestial appearances.* In the early war of the Republic with the Latins, the gods, Castor and Pollux, are said to have appeared on white horses, and gained a victory for the Roman army, for which the general, Posthumius, vowed and built a temple; and in Cicero's time, there was shown the mark of their horses' hoofs at Regillum; (Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. iii. 5. ib. ii. 2. vid. de Div. i. 34;) as the marks of Hercules' feet were shown in Scythia! (Herodot. l. iv. p. iv. 251.) Dionysius of Halicarnassus says, that in his time, a yearly festival, a sacrifice, and procession, preserved the memorial of this fact, which, after all, was the ridicule of the wiser Heathens themselves. (Vid. Cic. de Nat. iii. 5.) Thus

Mabillon published an old History of the Holy Wars, written by a pretended eye-witness, where it is affirmed of three Romish saints, that they also appeared on white horses, at the head of armies. (Bell. Sac. Hist. in Mabill. Iter. Ital. T. i. Par. ii. p. 138.) In Italy are frequently shown the marks of hands and feet on stones, made by saints or angels. (Rom. Mod. Gior. v. Rion. di Camp. c. i.) And it is notorious that the papists have many churches and monuments erected in testimony of saints and angels fighting visibly for them. See also Boldonii Epigraph. l. ii. p. 349, as to St. James fighting for Spain; whilst the largest altar in St. Peter's at Rome represents Attila, in full march to Rome, terrified and driven back by an angel, and the castle and church of St. Angelo are so named from an angel appearing there, in the popedom of Gregory the Great. (Rom. Mod. Giorn. 1; Rion. di Borgo. 1.)—Secondly, *As to images fallen from heaven.* Cicero says, the worship of Ceres of Enna was celebrated with wonderful devotion through Sicily, numerous prodigies attesting her divinity, and many deposing to miraculous help received from her in the utmost distress, and that her figure was not believed to have been made by human hands, but dropt down to them from heaven. (Cic. in Ver. 449, and 5—7.) Now, let us substitute in the place of Ceres, the image of our Lady of Loretto, or of Impruneta, or any other miraculous Romish saint, and the same account will suit the modern idol, as Cicero relates of the ancient; nay, Mr. Brydone, in his Tour, has the following striking observation upon it:—"The temple of Ceres, at Enna, was re- "nowned all over the heathen world, and pilgrimages "were made to it, *as they are at present to Loretto.*" (vol. ii. 244.) Aringhus names the very year in which St. Dominic's picture fell down from heaven, (1530,) to the confusion, as he states, of all the impious enemies of images. (Aring. Rom. Subter. l. v. c. 5.) At Rome, is a picture of the Virgin which came from heaven with much pomp, and, after hanging awhile in the air, with great lustre, in the sight of all the clergy and people, was deli-

vered by angels to Pope John the First, who marched out in grand procession to receive this celestial present; precisely as Numa did, to receive the famous ancile or shield from heaven. (Rom. Mod. Giorn ii; Rion. di Ripa. c. 43.) There is scarcely a great town without its miraculous image, made by angels, and sent down from heaven. (Montfauc. Diar. 137.) All these are mere copies of the heathen fables—of the Diana of Euripides, which he says fell from Jupiter. (Iphig. in Taur. l. 86.) Herodian's image of the Mother of the Gods, (l. i. c. 35.) Numa's Ancile, or Shield, which he persuaded the Romans fell from heaven; (Plut. in Numa, p. 68, and Ovid, Fast. l. iii.;) the Trojan Palladium, a wooden statue of three cubits, which fell from heaven and protected Troy; (Pitisci. Lexic. Antiquitat.) and the Image of the great Goddess, which the town-clerk of Ephesus gravely affirmed that all the people knew fell down from Jupiter. (Acts xix. 35.) It is further remarkable, with regard to Numa's shield, that as (for the better preservation of the original) he had several others made so exactly like it, that the original could not be distinguished; (Ov. Fast. l. iii.;) so the Romish priests took the hint, and have so many copies of the picture of the Virgin which descended from heaven, that there is equal difficulty to settle their pretensions to the divine original.—Thirdly, As to *Heathen and Romish relics.* The rod of Romulus, with which he performed his auguries, was preserved as sacred, and never handled by the people. (Plut. in Camil. 145.) So the modern priests of Rome pretend they have the rod of Moses with which he performed his miracles, which they show in one of the chief churches. Again, the old Romans asserted, that when the temple where their rod was kept was burnt, it was found entire in the ashes, (Valer. Max. c. viii. 10. It. Cic. de Divin. i. 17,) which miracle has been often copied by their descendants; but especially in an image of our Saviour in St. John Lateran, over which the flames, it seems, had no power, though the church has been twice burnt. (Rom. Gior. vi. Rion de Monti. xi. 4.)

—Fourthly, As to *ascribing the functions of life, or locomotion, to mere matter.* The image of Fortune in old Rome spoke twice in favour of some who had dedicated a temple to her. (Valer. Max. i. 8.) Apollo's statue, on the approach of a public calamity wept for three days and nights. (Livy, l. xliii. 13.) The idols in Juno's temple sweat drops of blood. (Ib. 23. 31. and 27. 4.) Certain sacred mystical things travelled about from country to country, and after many removals settled in Delus. (Herodot. l. iv. p. 255.) The frankincense in the temple miraculously dissolved without the help of fire, which, however, Horace laughed at, when the priests tried to impose upon him at Gnatia. (Sat. i. v. v. 98.) Arion, the musician, rode safely on a dolphin when thrown overboard. (Anc. Mythol.) The harpies, or winged furies, gave much trouble to "pious" Æneas. (Virg. Æn. iii. 211.) Now let us observe the analogy in Popery. Their images speak, weep, sweat, and bleed. (Rom. Mod. Gior. vi. Rion. di Monti xi) One image of the Virgin at Rome reprimanded Pope Gregory the Great for passing her too carelessly; and in St. Paul's Church, a crucifix made a speech to St. Bridget. (Ibid. Gior. v. Rion. di Camp.) Another Madonna addressed the sexton in praise of one of her votaries. (Durant. de Rit. l. i. c. 5.) An image of our Lord wept so copiously before the sacking of Rome by the barbarians, that several pious monks were employed in wiping its face with cotton. (Rom. Mod. Gior. vi. Rio. di Mon. xxxi.) One church in Rome is built in honour of an image which bled abundantly from a blow given to it by a blasphemer! (Ib. Gior. iii. Rio. di Mont. xvii.) The holy house of Loretto went from Nazareth to Dalmatia, and thence to Loretto, and all this before the invention of balloons, rail-roads, or steam-boats —vid. the inscription set up within it. The liquefaction of St. Januarius's blood at Naples, whenever brought to his head, is one of the standing miracles of Italy. This miracle regularly takes place on his festival, though our own Addison, who witnessed it twice, declares it to be one "of the most clumsy

tricks he had ever seen attempted." (Add. Trav. at Naples.) It is also performed whenever danger threatens. The parallel between this and a heathen observance is very striking. The month dedicated to Mars was the regular time for carrying the Roman *ancile* in procession ; yet when war was proclaimed, the Salii were solemnly to remove the *ancile*, in order to rouse Mars from his seat to assist them. (Vid. Alex. ab. Alexand. l. i. c. 26. ; and Kennet's Rom. Antiq. p. 75.) Thus we find, in both cases, a stated festival in honour of an idol, and a recurrence to the same power, on extraordinary occasions. At Ravenna, are mosaics of several successive archbishops, on all of whom they declare that the Holy Ghost used to descend visibly in the shape of a dove. (Hist. Raven. Aring. Rom. Subt. l. 6. c. 48.) The Romish legends assert that dolphins have repeatedly taken up, and brought ashore their saints, with great pomp, precisely as Arion was assisted. (Aring. Rom. Subt. l. i. c. 9.) In the church at Rome, which joins the Gate of the People, is an altar whose inscription expressly asserts, that Pope Paschal II. built it by divine inspiration, in order to drive away a nest of demons or monsters, who used to perch upon a tree there, and insult the good citizens ; and no doubt had a Pope existed in Virgil's time, Æneas need not to have been tormented as he was by the Harpies, and would also have raised an altar for his deliverance, as gladly as those who were rescued by Pope Paschal II. The next letter will briefly pursue this parallel, as it respects some of the *customs* of heathenism and popery.

LETTER X.

On the Identity of the Refuge or Protection afforded to Criminals under the Pagan and Papal Systems, the similarity of the two Priesthoods, and of the Religious Orders and Fraternities of Heathenism and Popery.

AN ALLIANCE WILL BE FOUND TO SUBSIST BETWEEN HEATHENISM AND POPERY, IN THE FOLLOWING CUSTOMS OF THE TWO RELIGIONS: First, THE REFUGE OR PROTECTION AFFORDED TO PERSONS SEEKING SANCTUARY—Romulus, in imitation of the cities of Greece, opened an asylum for fugitives from all other nations. (Ovid. Fast. iii.) A custom, which has been transferred directly from the heathen temples to the Popish churches; nor will it avail to contend, that this custom is derived from the Jewish provision of the cities of refuge; because those cities were only typical of the expected Saviour, and the type was consequently abrogated at his coming. The Romish church, however, improved, as usual, upon the heathen custom; for while the old republic had but one asylum, there were hundreds in the single city of Rome; and whereas, when the sanctuary of ancient Rome was found to produce licentiousness, they enclosed it, so as to prevent all access: (Dio. l. xlvii. p. 385:) the popish sanctuaries stood perpetually open, not to receive strangers, but to shelter criminals; so that what our Saviour said of the chief Jewish temple literally applied to all the popish temples—that they had "turned the house of prayer into a den of thieves." In the primitive ages, the emperors and councils put severe restrictions on this privilege, exempting murder, adultery, rape, theft, &c.; (Justin. Novel. xvii. c. 7;) but the most detestable

crimes found sanctuary in the holy Romish church, whence, in part, assassinations became so common in Italy, churches being always at hand, and always open to save the offender, both from the spiritual and temporal penalties which the laws of God and man alike denounce against the shedders of human blood. Secondly, ANOTHER RESEMBLANCE WILL APPEAR IN THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE TWO RELIGIONS, on which the celebrated Leslie (on Deism) makes this remark: "As the devil apes God "in his institutions of religion, his feasts, his sacrifices, "&c. so likewise *in his priests,* without whom no religion, "whether true or false, can stand." The high priest, or Pontifex Maximus of Old Rome, possessed the greatest authority and dignity in the republic, and was considered the arbiter or judge of all things, civil as well as sacred, human as well as divine. (Cic. pro. Dom. i. Fest. l. xi. in voce Max. id. in Ord. Sacerdot. and Vell. Pater. l. 2. 128.) His power, established almost with the foundation of the city, "was an omen and sure presage" (says Polydore Virgil) "of that priestly majesty by which Rome was once "again to reign as universally as it had done before by "force of its arms."—(Pol. Ver. De rerum invent. l. 4. c. xiv.) Even divine honours were commonly bestowed on the ancient emperors, who assumed the office of augur, as well as of pontiff, as appears from several coins of Augustus, Vespasian, Julius, &c. Now, the sovereign pontiff, instead of deriving his succession from St. Peter, a poor and humble fisherman, who, if ever he was at Rome at all, certainly did not reside there in worldly pomp and splendour, may with more reason and a better plea, style himself the successor of the old high priest of heathenism, while many of his benighted and bigoted followers have not been wanting even in the ascription of divine honours to this modern augur and pontifex, this spiritual and temporal potentate. The jesuits of Clermont declared before all Paris, that the Pope was as infallible as Jesus Christ himself; (Villiers on the Reformation;) while Ravaillac affirmed, before the council, that he had killed Henry IV.

because he made war with the Pope, which he affirmed "was the same as to make war against God, seeing that "the Pope was God, and God was the Pope." (Vide Thuani Hist.) A declaration, which remarkably corresponds with the confession of faith found in the box of a priest at Gorey, (a copy of which is given by Sir Richard Musgrave,) in which the Pope is twice blasphemously called "Christ's vicar, the Lord God, the Pope;" and once "the "Holy Father, the Lord God, the Pope:" in which confession it is further declared, that "the Pope, together "with the primates, bishops, &c. can make vice virtue, "and virtue vice, according to their pleasure;" an opinion which Cardinal Bellarmine himself deliberately maintains, alleging that "the Catholic" (meaning the Romish) "faith teaches us that every virtue is good, and that every "vice is evil; but if the Pope should err in commanding "vices and forbidding virtues, *the church would be bound "to believe that* VICES ARE GOOD, AND VIRTUES EVIL, "*unless she wished to sin against conscience.*" His words are, "Fides catholica docet, omnem virtutem esse bonam, "omne vitium esse malum: si autem Papa erraret, præcipiendo vitia, vel prohibendo virtutes, *teneretur Ecclesia "credere* VITIA ESSE BONA, VIRTUTES ESSE MALAS, *nisi "vellet contra conscientiam peccare.*"—Bellarmine de Romano Pontifice, lib. 4. cap. 5.

It is only that "strong delusion," under which all papists are infatuated "to believe a lie," which can possibly account for any one of them enduring to read this solemn blasphemy of an eminent cardinal, without at once resolving to shake off the yoke which such men impose upon the minds and consciences of their adherents. To return, however, to the subject in hand. It is clear that the apostolic prediction of the Romish Apostasy has been completely realized in the other pretensions and doctrines of the Popes, and especially in the papal doctrine of transubstantiation. (2 Thess ii. 4, 12.) Again, all the Egyptian priests had their heads shaved, and kept continually bald. (Herodot. l. ii. 36. Juv. vi. 33.) On which account it is most pro-

bable that the Jewish priests were commanded to renounce a custom so plainly idolatrous, and "not to shave their "heads, nor to make any baldness upon them." (Ezek. xliv. 20, and Lev. xxi. 5.) And thus, the Emperor Commodus, that he might become a priest, caused himself to be shaved. (Lamprid. in Commod. 9.) And this very pagan rasure (or tonsure as they call it) on the crown of the head, has long been the distinguishing mark of the Romish priesthood. To return, however, to his Holiness, it is remarkable that of all the sovereign pontiffs of Pagan Rome, Caligula was the first who ever offered his foot to be kissed by those who approached him; a custom which, when first introduced, raised a general indignation, Seneca designating it as an introduction of slavery, and the last affront to liberty. (De Benef. l. ii. 12.) Yet this servile act unworthy alike of being imposed, or observed, by man, is now the standing ceremonial of Christian Rome, a necessary condition of access to the reigning Popes; and observed accordingly, not by French and Italian Catholics only, but *(proh pudor!)* by Protestant Englishmen. Whenever this great personage appears in public, there is no external mark of divine homage that is commonly offered to the Supreme Being which is thought too high to honour his appearance, and propitiate his favour; while the holy father is, on his part, incessantly occupied in dispensing his sacred benedictions to all his admiring devotees. In the *Rélation de ce qui s'est passé à Rome*, published by Keating, it is expressly asserted that the late Pope performed many miracles, and that every one regarded him as a saint. (Tom. iii. p. 126. 140. 3.) A THIRD RESEMBLANCE WILL APPEAR IN THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS AND FRATERNITIES OF HEATHENISM AND POPERY. The ancient societies of the augurs, the Pontifices majores and minores, the Salii, the Fratres Arvales, &c. will here occur to every classical reader, as the precursors of the Franciscans, Dominicans, Benedictines, Jesuits, &c. The Flamines of heathen Rome appear to bear an affinity to the Romish cardinals, while the vestal virgins probably supplied a hint for the nunneries

of popery. (See especially as to the Flamines, Liv. l. i. and Noct. Att. l. x. c. 15.) The severe austerities of the monastic life, as exemplified in the Selli or priests of Dodonæan Jove, (the self-mortifying race mentioned by Plato, in Timæo, p. 1044, and by Homer in Il. xvii. 234,) bear a striking resemblance to the monks of La Trappe. They were accustomed, like their successors, to live by themselves, retired from the world, and fancied that in becoming less like men, they became more like God:—

> "Whose groves the Selli, race austere, surround,
> "Their feet unwash'd, their slumbers on the ground."—Pope.

The order of Mendicants, or lazy begging priests, was well known to the ancient heathens. They travelled from house to house, with sacks on their backs, and from an opinion of their sanctity, levied large contributions of money, bread, wine, and victuals, for the fraternity. (See Apuleius Metam. l. viii. p. 262,) in whose description we have the very portrait of the Mendicant Friars, who go about the streets in the same habit, and on the same errand, and never fail to obtain from the superstition of those, whose good works are to carry them to heaven, abundant "provision for the convent." Even Cicero (himself a heathen) in his Book of Laws would restrain this practice of mendicity to one particular order of priests, and that only on certain days, because, as he truly says, "it propagates "superstition, and impoverishes families." (Cic. de Legib. l. ii. 9. 16.) The Church of Rome, however, in the full blaze of a light which this wise heathen never enjoyed, not only continues the custom, but with a worldly policy peculiar to herself, has actually multiplied her Begging Orders; of whom Burnet observes, "Under the appearance "of poverty, and coarse diet and clothing, they gained "much esteem, and became almost the only preachers and "confessors then in the world. They had a general at "Rome, from whom they received such directions as the "popes sent them, so that they were more useful to the "papacy than the monks had been: they had also the

"school learning in their hands, but living much in the "world, they could not conceal their vices so well as the "monks had done."—(Burnet's Abr. 149.)

I shall conclude this letter with an extract from the works of the great Lord Bacon: "Superstitionis causæ "sunt, grati et sensuales ritus ac ceremoniæ, externæ et "pharisaicæ sanctitatis excessus; traditionum major quam "par fuerit reverentia, quæ Ecclesiam non potest non one-"rare; stratagemata Prælatorum, quibus utuntur ad am-"bitionem propriam et lucrum." (Opera. vol. x. p. 48. edit. London, 1803.)

If the above opinion of that illustrious statesman, thus solemnly recorded against the errors of popery, were duly weighed by certain Protestant advocates of the Romish Church, it might perhaps produce a beneficial result.

LETTER XI.

On the Conformity between the Religious Processions of the Heathens and those of the Papists.

THE CONFORMITY BETWEEN THE RELIGIOUS PROCESSIONS OF THE HEATHENS AND THOSE OF THE PAPISTS may be next noticed. The main object of the ancients was to supply the people with something visible and tangible in their religion, which they regarded as an affair of the senses, and not of the heart; and therefore strove to excite such an interest by external ceremonies and observances as the mind might rest upon, in the absence of that light which afterwards displayed God as "a Spirit," and declared, that all who worshipped him "must worship "him in spirit and in truth." Every thing, accordingly, in their worship was gross and carnal, and of a piece with the obscure and degraded state of the world at that period.

The account given by Plutarch, of Numa, is very significant: "By the establishment," says he, of "supplications "and *processions to the gods*, which inspire reverence, while "they amuse the spectators, and by pretended *miracles* and "*divine appearances*, he reduced the fierce spirits of his "subjects under the power of *superstition*." (Plutar. in Numa, p. 16.) In describing their religious processions, Apuleius observes, that the chief magistrate used frequently to assist, in his robes of ceremony, attended by the priests, in white vestments, with wax-candles in their hands, carrying upon a pageant, or thensa, the images of their gods, dressed out in their best clothes; these were followed by the chief youth, in white linen vestments, singing hymns in honour of the God whose festival they were celebrating, accompanied by crowds of persons, of the same religion, all with flambeaux or wax-candles in their hands. In this account Pausanius is agreed, ii. 7. And now let any one who has been abroad, and more especially in Italy, Spain, and Portugal, testify whether the above description would not serve quite as well for a papal, as for a pagan procession; so that when Tournefort, in his Travels through Greece, censures the members of the Greek church for adopting "many "of the old rites of heathenism, such as carrying about the "images of the saints in their processions to singing and "music," (Let. iii. 44,) he reminds us of the remark of a learned author, "*On va souvent chercher, bien loin, ce qu'on a chez soi*;" since the reflection certainly applies with equal force to his own, as to the Greek church. So far, however, from this practice giving any scandal in Italy, the learned author of the Florentine Inscriptions takes occasion to show the conformity between them and the heathens from this very instance of carrying in procession the representations of their saints, as the heathens did those of their gods in their sacred processions. (Inscript. Antiq. Flor. p. 377.) In other processions of the church of Rome, the self-inflicted cruelties of the devotees bear a near resemblance to those of the goddess Bellona, or the Syrian goddess; as also to those of the votaries of Isis, all of whom used to

slash and cut themselves when they appeared in procession, like the priests of Baal, recorded in the Bible, (1 Kings xviii. 28,) or the priests of India, at this hour. I allude to the practices of the Flagellantes, more especially in the time of Lent, who march with whips in their hands, and lash themselves as they go along, on the bare back, till it is all covered with blood. So absolutely are such practices opposed to the benignant spirit of the Gospel, and so calculated are they to render the sacrifice of a Saviour nugatory, that even a wise heathen could discern the impiety and folly of such a course; of which he observes, "They try to appease the "gods by such methods as an enraged man would hardly take "to avenge himself; but if there be any gods who desire "to be so worshipped, they deserve not to be worshipped "at all; since the very worst of tyrants, though they have "sometimes torn and tortured people's limbs, have yet never "commanded men to torture themselves." (Fragm. apud Lipsu. Elect. l. ii. 18.) The Emperor Commodus was so offended with these Bellonarii, or Flagellantes of heathenism, that he commanded they should not be suffered to impose upon the spectators, but be obliged to cut and slash themselves in earnest.—(Lamprid. in Commodo. v.)

To return to the ordinary processions of popery, it will be found that *their* pageant is the consecrated Host, and all are expected to bow down before it. This is a refinement upon the heathen worship, and such an extravagance as they never supposed likely to happen; for Cicero (himself a heathen) when adverting to the absurdity of the Heathens in the choice of their gods, inquires, "Was any man "ever so mad as to take *that which he feeds upon* for a "god?" (De nat. Deor. iii.) The Papists have supplied a practical answer to his question; and what this old Roman could not but suppose too gross even for the idolatry of Egypt, is now become the principal part of worship, and the distinguishing article of faith in the creed of modern Rome. It is impossible to enlarge here upon the masterly expedient which Transubstantiation affords for exalting the necessity of a standing priesthood, at the expense of common

sense, and in opposition to the plainest testimony of Scripture: but I cannot avoid noticing the simple answer which was given by a Chinese disciple to a Romish missionary, who, after having taken great pains to teach him Christianity, asked him before a large assembly, "How many gods there "were?" to which the humble learner answered, "None!" "—"None!" exclaimed the astonished priest, "why, have "not I always told you there was One?"—"Yes, sir," replied the new convert, "but you know I ate him yes-"terday!"

LETTER XII.

On the Agreement between the Water Idolatry of the Heathens and of the Papists.

It may be useful to point out THE EXACT CONFORMITY BETWEEN THE WATER IDOLATRY OF THE HEATHENS AND THAT OF THE PAPISTS. When the true apprehension of the Deity was banished from the world, there was scarcely any thing with which men were conversant that did not either become an object of divine worship, or a supposed medium of access to the Deity. In water, more especially, the pagans considered a divine power to reside, and they bowed before it accordingly. Jul. Firm. says, that the Egyptians put up petitions to fountains and rivers in general, and to the Nile in particular, and had a great veneration for the sea. (Vide lib. ii.; and Herbert's Religion of the Gentiles, p. 139.) Thus the Persians held it impious to pollute running streams, and paid them divine honours. (Herodot. lib. i.; Strab. lib. xv.) The Greeks worshipped the Ocean as the father of the gods; and when Alexander had subdued a city, he offered sacrifice to the Ocean. (Justin. lib. xii.) A part of the idolatry of Athens appears to have been

the worship of water; and the learned Gale in his "Court "of the Gentiles," considers the judicial tribunal of the Areopagus (Acts xvii. 19.) to which St. Paul was cited, as deriving its title from the water idolatry of the Grecians. Ἀρειον πάγον, signifying Mars' well, where that idol was invoked—πάγος being derived from πήγη, a fountain, whence they who drank of the same well were called *Pagans*. See Court of Gent. Part. iii. p. 205. The Romans honoured water in the same manner, and had their gods and goddesses presiding over lakes, rivers, and fountains, of which the following examples may be briefly referred to:—Neptune invoking the gods of the rivers; (Ovid. Met. l. i. l. 276.) Daphne praying to the river Peneus; (ib. l. i. l. 545.) Diana charging Calisto, when deflowered, not to pollute the Sacred Fountains; (ib. l. ii. l. 465.) Virgil invoking the fountain Arethusa; (Eclog. x. l. 1.) Aristeus visiting the river Peneus by his (the river's) divine permission; (ib. Georg. l. iv. l. 357.) Æneas supplicating the god Tyber, and promising to offer up a sacrifice to him; (ib. Æneid.) Æneas worshipping the rivers on his first landing; (ib. Æn. vii. l. 135.) Horace vowing a sacrifice to the fountain of Blandusia; (l. iii. Od. xiii.) The Sacred Well near Rome, where Egeria met Numa; (Juv. Sat. iii. l. 13. and l. 18.) Ovid on the same Holy Well, which he designates as, "Antiquâ Religione Sacer," (Fast. l. iii.) and again on its origin, (Fast. l. ii.)

Thus, in India, at the present moment, the same adoration is paid by the benighted idolaters to the river Ganges, and to a variety of sacred fountains and wells; offerings and sacrifices are also made to the different rivers esteemed sacred; and ablutions are constantly performed, by the direction of the Brahmins, or Indian priests, which are considered efficacious in washing away the guilt of sin, and purging the conscience of the worshipper.

"Of holy rivers, dedicated to one or other of the deities, "Brahma, Vishnow, or Mahadeo, there are twenty-eight, "named in the Institutes of the Emperor Akber, beginning "with the Ganges, and traversing the whole continent to

"the Indies; so that all the professors of Hinduism are "within reach of an imaginary antidote against the conse- "quences of guilt. Each of these rivers has some peculiar "property ascribed to it, and many places upon the banks "are held sacred, and annually resorted to. The virtues "of the river Ganges are universally allowed to be pre- "eminent—the water of it assuredly purifies from all sin: "ablutions in it are used continually to this end, as Euro- "peans daily see; and the dying, when within a moderate "distance of it, are carried to its edge, and their feet are "placed in the river, that thus they may have a happy "passage out of life. Its water is conveyed to distant parts "for the same purposes; and if persons are not within reach "of it—thinking of it, and invoking it, when they bathe in "any other water, will still give them all the efficacy of it." —See Mr. Grant's Observations on India, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, in 1813.

Now the analogy between the practices of heathen Rome and India, and the practices of the church of Rome and her priests in Ireland, although forming a part of our own Protestant empire, and lying immediately under our own eyes, is very remarkable. A main part of the worship of Irish Roman Catholics is made by their corrupt priests to consist in this water idolatry. St. Patrick's Purgatory is in an island situate in the midst of a lake, in the county of Donegal, called Logh Derg, or the Red Lake, reputed to be sacred; and to this place immense shoals of misguided papists are sent by their spiritual guides to wash away their sins, precisely as is done in India, under the tuition of the heathen priests. As soon as the pilgrims come within sight of the Holy Island, they pull off their shoes and stockings, uncover their heads, and walk with their beads in one hand, and sometimes a cross in the other, to the lake side, from whence they are ferried over, for sixpence each; they then go to the prior, and ask his blessing; and then to St. Patrick's altar, where kneeling down, they say one pater, one ave, and one creed. Rising up, they kiss the stone of the altar, and from thence go into the chapel, where they say

three paters, three aves, and one creed. Then, beginning at a corner of the chapel, they walk round it and St. Patrick's altar seven times, saying a decade, (that is, ten ave-marias and one paternoster,) every round. In the first and last circuit, they kiss the cross before the chapel, and touch it with their shoulders, the last circuit. Next, they go to the penitential beds, (or a collection of hard stones on which seven saints are feigned to have slept,) every one of which they surround thrice, saying three paters, three aves, and one creed. Then kneeling, they say the like number. After which, they enter each bed separately, and circuiting it thrice in the inside, they say three paters, three aves, and one creed; which done, they kneel, and repeat three more of each. Leaving the penal beds, they go into the water, and go thrice round some sacred stones, saying five paters, five aves, and one creed; after that, they go farther into the water to another stone, and say one pater, one ave, and one creed, with their hands lifted up; from the water, they return to the chapel, where they repeat the Lady's Psalter (which consists of fifty aves, and five paters, or, according to some, of 150 aves and 15 paters); and thus they finish one station, which must be performed thrice a day, about sun-rising, noon, and sun-setting; only bread and water being allowed them. On the ninth day, the prior puts the pilgrims into St. Patrick's Cave, where they are shut up very close for twenty-four hours, during which time, all manner of refreshment is kept from them. While they are in the cave, they are bound to perform the same tally of devotion as on the preceding days. On the tenth day they are let out, after which, they immediately go into the water, and wash their bodies, and more particularly the head, to signify that they are entirely cleansed from their sins. To encourage the resort to this place, the worshippers are told, that in consideration of such a penance, they will either escape the pains of purgatory, or have them greatly abated; but the profit accruing from their visit, and the keeping the deluded people in gross darkness and ignorance, are the real motives.

While all this mummery lasts, (which is expressly declared in the written rules laid down for the Pilgrims to be *for the satisfaction of sin,*) mass is performed several times a-day, and a sermon is daily preached in Irish. They are also obliged to confess, before they begin their stations, and some do it much oftener, paying sixpence each time. In all the perambulations, they carry a cross-staff—and their crossing, bowing, kneeling, and kissing of stones are almost innumerable. If any one cannot perform this penance himself, he may obtain a licence from the prior for another to do it for him, who is paid for the purpose; while many who never saw Logh Derg, pay to have it done by proxy, which is considered quite as good as if they went in person, and which I, for one, certainly do not mean to deny.

When these deluded worshippers return from Logh Derg, they are treated by the common people with great respect and veneration, and they generally kneel down and ask their blessing, but the writer who has given the public the fullest account of this gross superstition, relates a humorous anecdote of one of these pious devotees, who, having been very hospitably entertained at one of her neighbour's houses, after doing penance at St. Patrick's Purgatory, got up before day, and walked away with all the linen she could lay her hands on. Nor will this appear extraordinary, if, as some hold, penance has, like confession, a prospective efficacy in reference to sins about to be committed, as well as to those which have occurred already. So far as confession is concerned, it was certainly in evidence, on the trial of the conspirators of the fifth of November, 1605, that some of them obtained absolution before-hand.

LETTER XIII.

On the Agreement between the Water Idolatry of the Heathens, and of the Papists.

[CONTINUED.]

IN addition to the great Dagon of St. Patrick's Purgatory, the Irish abound in holy wells for the absolution of sin. St. John's Well, in the county of Meath, is much resorted to by pilgrims. The legend asserted of this spring is, that one Mr. Warren, the proprietor of the land about it, having undertaken a pilgrimage to the river Jordan, as he was washing himself in the water, his staff dropped into it, and was conveyed through a subterraneous passage to this well, and cast up by the ebullition of the water on a Midsummer-day, in the sight of his shepherd, who, bringing it to Mrs. Warren, she knew it to be her husband's staff, and found an inscription upon it, stating that great benefit would be derived by going in pilgrimage to that well upon St. John Baptist's day, "Credat Judæus Apella—non ego." It is generally visited on Midsummer-eve. When pilgrims come within sight of the well, they walk bareheaded and bare-footed up to it, and drink plentifully of the water. They kneel at the east corner, and say five paters, five aves, and one creed; and the same number, in the same posture, at every one of the other three corners, and go thrice round *on their knees*, which makes up one station. They go through four of these stations; after which, they *kneel in the water*, say three paters, three aves, and one creed, drink of the water, wash in it, and conclude all with prayers to St. John the Baptist for his aid and intercession.

At Cranfield, in the county of Antrim, there is a running spring, said to be consecrated by St. Colman, a famous Irish saint. Pilgrims go to it on May-eve. They empty and clean the well at twilight, stay all night about it, saying a certain number of paters, aves, and creeds. In the morning, they find small transparent stones, of an amber colour, in the bottom of the well, which (if you believe them) grew there the night before, and will preserve those that carry one about them, from any loss by fire and water. These stones are to be found there at any time, yet the natives thereabouts will not be convinced of it.

There is a tradition among the Irish, that St. Patrick brought three crosses from Rome to Ireland, and that St. Colman* set up one of them near Ardbo Church, in the county of Tyrone, on the brink of Lough Neagh. This cross is about eighteen feet high, four feet square, and fairly cut, having images of their saints on every side. They believe that it is better to pray before it, than in any common place, and that the water directly opposite to this cross has great virtue in it, for healing man or beast. The pilgrims go thrice round the cross, upon their knees, saying their beads, and at the west side of the cross they bow to it. When they have done, they leave a piece of silver on the pedestal.

On the subject of CROSSES, the Romish Bishop Milner has kindly informed us (Inquiry into certain Vulgar Opinions, &c. p. 149, third edition,) that a portion of *the true cross* is undoubtedly in possession of a friend of his, in Ireland, and that he has himself *kissed* the precious relic, having seen and believed the vouchers for its authenticity.

At Clunfad eastachd, in the county of Monaghan, there is a well pretended to be consecrated by St. Patrick, near which there is a small heap of stones, with a large stone on the top, having the print of his knee in it, and over all, a

* Colganus, in his Act. Apost. p. 246, tells us, that St. Colman planted a tree, and that a piece of the wood, carried about by any person confiding in the saint, was a miraculous security against the most imminent dangers of death! "These be thy gods, O Israel!"

stone cross, said to be erected by himself there; and forty-nine paces from thence, an alder-tree, which sprung up (it is said) immediately upon his blessing the ground. The pilgrims to this place, first kneel at the north side of the well, salute St. Patrick, and say fifteen paters, and one creed. They rise up, bow to him, walk thrice round the well, and drink of the water every round, at the place where they began. From thence they go to the heap of stones, bow to the cross, kiss the print of St. Patrick's knee, and put one of their knees into it. Then they go thrice round the heap *on their knees*, always kissing the stone that has the print of St. Patrick's knee: when they come to it, they rise up, bow to it, and walk thrice round, bowing to the stone, whenever they come before it, and the last time kiss it. From the heap of stones, they go to the alder-tree; they begin at the west side by bowing to it, go thrice round, and bow to it from east to west, and conclude their abominable idolatry with fifteen paters and one creed. When any of the neighbours have their cattle sick, they bring some of the water of this well for it to drink, in order to a cure.

There is at Urney, about midway between Belturbet and Cavan, a holy well, or rather a pond, and near it a heap of stones, where every Midsummer-eve great multitudes assemble and kneel before one of the stones, on which is cut a face, representing St. Brigid, and kiss it; which was explained by the parish priest, who was one of the worshippers, to be an adoration allowed by their church, as due to a relic of the saint who placed the stone where it was.

Such was the sense of the legislature, in Queen Anne's time, of the effect of these superstitions upon public morals, and also of the political evils connected with them, that by an act of parliament passed in the second year of her reign, it was attempted to restrain and punish such gross idolatry by a pecuniary fine of 10*s*. on all who should frequent St. Patrick's Purgatory, or the Holy Wells, and of 20*s*. on those who erected booths for the sale of liquor and

victuals; and by that act, sheriffs, justices of the peace, and other magistrates, were required to be diligent in preventing such resorts, and in demolishing all crosses, pictures and inscriptions, which were any where publicly set up, and were the occasions of popish superstition. Such, however, has been the power of the priesthood, and such the darkness and ignorance in which they have kept the people, that notwithstanding all the efforts which have been made to check these abominations, the same practices still prevail in all their height.—Quid leges sine moribus?

The above examples may serve to show the affinity that exists between the sacred waters of the Heathen, and the Romish, idolatry. Indeed, as has been already observed, there can be little doubt that the holy water of the Catholic churches is descended in a straight line from the holy water of the heathen temples; one evidence of which (among others) occurs in that remarkable passage in Ovid, where Deucalion and Pyrrha are represented as sprinkling themselves with the holy water of heathenism, before they went into the Temple of Themis:

> ——"Adeunt pariter Cephisidas undas,
> "Inde ubi libatos irroravere liquores."—Met. l. i. c. 370.

Upon which passage, Menelius has this remarkable note—"Inde mos aquâ sacratâ vestes supplicantium inspergendi. "in Christianorum Templis originem traxit:" — or, "Hence the custom of sprinkling the clothes of worshippers with holy water in the temples of Christians had its "origin"—a testimony too conclusive to be disputed, or explained away, by modern Roman Catholics.

LETTER XIV.

On the Conformity between Purgatory and Transmigration.

THE CONFORMITY BETWEEN PURGATORY AND A PART OF THE CREED OF HEATHENISM WHICH ANSWERS TO IT, may be next noticed. Purgatory is no other, in its origin, than a relic of the old doctrine of Transmigration, although the Church of Rome has contrived to abuse this ancient superstition to worse purposes, and to make it productive of even more mischief in the world, than the doctrine from which it was derived. Pythagoras, and indeed the ancients in general, maintained, that the souls of men transmigrated into species corresponding with their former natures, but which still was not the final destiny that awaited them ; and this supposed transmigration was not merely confined to a state of being, but it frequently had reference to a distinct place, as well as to a different condition. Dr. Johnson, in defining the word transmigration, describes it as "a passage from "one place, or state, into another." Now, what is the Romish purgatory but a transmigration in both these particulars? The soul is represented by it as passing from its corporeal residence in the present life, into an intermediate state of existence, from which, however, it is again to be released by the transcendent power of the priest, and in virtue of prayers for the dead, when it shall be translated into a final state of felicity and glory. Bellarmine himself admits that Plato held a purgatory ; (Bel. de Purgat. l. i. c. 8 ;) and doubtless, in arguing for the antiquity of his own religion, he there, as elsewhere, carries it farther back than Christianity. It is not my present purpose to combat the doctrine of purgatory, upon the principles of Scripture or reason, but simply to show its conformity with the religion of heathenism. I therefore purposely abstain from

adverting to the powerful arguments against it, which are derived from both these sources, and proceed to adduce a further confirmation of this view of the subject, which is supplied by the practices of the present idolaters in heathen India, as attested by the most eminent writers, but more particularly by Mr. Grant, in his valuable Document on the State of India, ordered to be printed by the House of Commons in 1813. In this work, speaking of the idolaters of India, he observes, "Methods are likewise de-"vised for the benefit of those who have not been suffi-"ciently careful during their own lives, to ensure the par-"don of their sins, by which their friends who survive are "enabled to be highly useful to them. The body, or the "bones of the deceased, being thrown into the Ganges, "temporary happiness at least is procured to the soul, "and the advantage of such a condition in another trans-"migration as shall at last bring it to heaven. At Gaya, "a famous resort of pilgrims, there is a particular stone, "on which the god Vishnow set his foot; and a person, by "putting on this stone, in the form prescribed, a certain "paste prepared there, and by repeating, at the same time, "the name of a deceased friend, can transfer that friend "from hell itself to supreme felicity. And this benefit he "may extend, not to one friend only, but, by repeated ap-"plications of the paste, to as many as he can recollect, "even of his distant connexions."—(Mr. Grant's State of India, p. 61.)

Now, who does not perceive the remarkable coincidence between the Indian heathen's notions of an intermediate state, and those entertained by the papists? The statement here given would serve, *mutatis mutandis*, for a description of the Romish purgatory. The distinctive features of each are precisely the same. We find the modern heathens, in India, recognising a provision for benefiting those who have not ensured the pardon of their own sins while they lived; the advantage of the intervention of friends for that purpose; the transmigration from this world to some intermediate state, and thence to heaven; and certain modes prescribed, no matter whether by mortuary paste, or

obituary masses, which can transfer deceased friends from a state of punishment to one of bliss—a benefit not confined to one friend only, but extending itself even to his remote connexions. Such are also the leading fallacies which go to make up the idea of purgatory in the Romish Church; and it will therefore appear, that whatever arguments against this corrupt and unscriptural doctrine may be drawn from other sources, it is primarily of heathen origin, and is idolatrous *per se*. But further: In speaking of oblations to the manes of deceased ancestors, Mr. Grant quotes the Hindoo Code, which says, "He" (the worshipper) "gives to the Brahmins money, goods, and food, dressed "and undressed, in the name of his father, grandfather, "and great grandfather, and of his mother, grandmother, "and great grandmother. The principle," adds Mr. Grant, "upon which they proceed, is that of increasing "the welfare, solace, and enjoyment, of departed progeni-"tors; the real effects are to provide a stated succession "of sacrificial entertainments for the Brahmins; to add to "the ceremonial burdens and superstitious terrors of the "people by threatenings of dreadful consequences, as well "to those who omit these rites, as to the spirits of the "deceased who are thus neglected." (State of India, p. 63.) Now, where is the difference between these idolatrous gifts to the priests of India, and the public endowment at St. Denis, by Louis XVIII, of a royal chapter of thirty-four canons, including the whole titular bishops and other ecclesiastics, whose duties are expressly defined to be, "to per-"form nine masses for the dead daily, viz. three for each of "the three dynasties of the French monarchy: to say vespers "daily for the dead, the service to be read, to be conse-"crated exclusively to prayers for the souls of the illus-"trious dead whose remains are deposited in that church;" for which object no less a sum than that of £10,000 sterling per annum was appropriated from an exhausted treasury? Where, I again ask, is the difference between the heathenism of India, at this moment, as detailed to a British House of Commons, and the heathenism of the church of Rome, at this moment, as evidenced by the above fact?

No ingenuity or sophistry can suggest a shade of distinction between the two cases, or evade the legitimate conclusion deducible from each. The casuistry of the Jesuits of Rome, of Paris, or of England, will seek in vain to establish any difference between the purgatory of India, and the purgatory of Rome, or between the means of supporting each system by a standing priesthood, who equally find their interest in propagating a gross delusion destructive to the souls of men, opposed to the Scriptures of truth, and repugnant to natural reason; since what Mr. Grant has remarked of the Creed of Hindooism, applies with equal force to that of Popery :—" What suitable ideas of spi-" ritual happiness and divine justice can a people adopting " such a practice possess? and how must it discourage vir-" tuous exertion to think, that all may be undone after the " death of the performer by the carelessness of another " person." In further confirmation of the heathen notions as to an intermediate state of existence bearing a close affinity to the Romish doctrine of purgatory, I would refer to Plutarch, who observes, that " It is according to justice that " the souls of virtuous men are advanced, at death, to the " rank of spirits, from which, if they are properly purified, " they are exalted into gods." (Plut. Vit. Rom. p. 36. edit. Paris.) In which passage we have the Romish purgatory completely defined, if, instead of "gods," we only read " angels."

I would also notice the remarkable passage in Virgil, in which his heathen description of the intermediate state of departed souls would serve equally well for the state of purgatory. See the lines in the 6th Æneid, beginning

. . . . Nec auras
" Respiciunt, clausæ tenebris et carcere cœco."

And so on to line 747; the literal translation of which passage is, " *Their life is gone with the last beams of light,* " *but not every ill; nor are all corporeal evils removed from* " *the unhappy beings.* It is absolutely unavoidable, that " many habits which have long grown up with the soul " should be confirmed there; *therefore are they tormented*

"*with pains, and pay the penalties of their former sins.*" He then describes the modes of punishment; one of which is, to have their guilt *burnt away by fire* ("scelus exuritur "igni;") and he adds, "Each of us has his demon from "whom we suffer, till length of time (when the fixed period "has elapsed) has *removed the inherent stains*, and has left "celestial reason pure, and restored the fire (of the soul) "to its original and simple brightness. *Then are we con-"veyed into Elysium, and we, who are the happy few, "possess the seats of bliss.*"

This pagan description of an intermediate state would evidently serve precisely as well for the papal purgatory; and indeed Lord Orrery observes upon it, "It bears so "near a resemblance to the modern purgatory, that were "the same words found in a Christian poet, they could not "be construed to any other signification." (Observation on Pliny's 9th Epist. B. v.)

I cannot here omit the remarkable testimony lately supplied to the British public by the proclamation of the Emperor of China, translated by the late Dr. Morrison, and published here in 1821.

The following is one of the directions given by the Emperor on his accession to the throne of his ancestors. "Let "officers be dispatched to sacrifice at the tombs of the "departed emperors, and kings, of every past dynasty—at "the grave of Confucius—and at the five great mountains, "and the four great rivers of China!"

How exact a resemblance is this of the purgatorian obsequies of St. Denis!

As prayers for the dead have a near connexion with purgatory, I will just suggest, for the consideration of the learned, whether the "*Terra sit tibi levis*," which is deservedly ridiculed by Martial, was not the foundation of prayers for the dead; certain it is that the office of the Romish priest, in the administration of extreme unction to the dying, as a passport to heaven, is identical with the duties assigned to the god MERCURY in the Heathen Mythology, who was accordingly called Ψυκοπομπος, or the Soul-guider, from the two words ψυχη, *anima*, and πεμπω, *mitto.*

The last testimony to which I shall advert, in proof of the connexion between purgatory and paganism is that of Broughton, who demonstrates that pagans and Mahometans hold that doctrine, as well as papists; while there is as little doubt that the corrupted Jews, in the time of the Maccabees, taught, in the same manner, that sin might be expiated by sacrifices *after the death of the sinner*, which is the reason why the Apocryphal books are held in such esteem by the papists, since more than one of their corrupt doctrines find support and sanction there.

The above may serve to show that the false and groundless doctrine of purgatory which the Church of Rome maintains to this hour with the utmost tenacity, although perhaps the most pernicious of all her errors, is, like so many other of her doctrines, drawn from the lowest depths of heathen corruption; a necessary consequence of rejecting, or perverting, the Scriptures of eternal truth, in favour of any human traditions, or inventions.

LETTER XV.

On the Identity of Heathen and Romish Pilgrimages.

THE CONFORMITY BETWEEN HEATHEN AND ROMISH PILGRIMAGES may next be considered. The ancient heathens believed, that some places were more holy than others, and therefore that visiting such places was highly meritorious; tended to satisfy the Divine justice, and to obtain the favour of Heaven. Pilgrimage to those sacred spots was consequently an essential part of the religion of heathenism; a religion in which the heart had no share; in which a renewal of heart was an unexplained and inexplicable mystery; and in which, a round of external duties and observances usurped the place of that spiritual worship, which the purity of vital religion invariably requires. Thus is it also in the church of Rome. The priests notoriously prescribe pilgrimages, sanction the holy places of popery

by their presence, perform public masses at them, assert that miracles are performed there, and are very well paid by the whole pilgrimage system. Indeed, it has been one of the great sources of the revenue of that church; the priests are paid by the pilgrims going, and they are paid by their staying away; for though pilgrimages may be remitted, it is not to be supposed that staying at home is done for nothing. This observance, or its commutation, is so necessary to the Romish Church, that (as in other cases) she has falsified and perverted the original text of Scripture, to give a better colour to the trade. In 3 John ver. 5. she makes the inspired writer praise Gaius for having "dealt faithfully with *pilgrims*," while all he is commended for, is for having done so by *strangers*, or those of another country; and again in 1 Timothy v. 10. the Romish versions make it the qualification of a good widow "that she "have lodged *pilgrims*," while she is really commended by the apostle for having lodged *strangers*, the verb used in that place being a compound of the same word which signifies *strangers*, and of another which means "to lodge."—See a great variety of similar falsifications of Scripture, to serve their purpose, adduced by Serres in his Treatise of "Popery an Enemy to Scripture." Innumerable instances of pilgrimages among the ancient heathens might here be given; but it may afford some variety to select the examples from modern idolatry, which is equally to my purpose.

"Holy places," says Mr. Grant, in the elaborate and valuable work already cited, "are spread through all parts of Hindostan. "Some of the most distinguished are "Benares, and the district ten miles round: the celebrity "of that city, and the continual resort to it, of pilgrims, "are well known." He then instances Oude, Metra, and Herdewar, characterizing the last as "a place of great "annual resort;" mentions Ellahbas as "esteemed super-"latively holy," and describes Cashmire as "all holy "land; forty-five places being dedicated to the Deity "Mahadeo, sixty-four to Vishnow, three to Brahmah, "and twenty-two to Durgah." He then points out the

famous Pagoda of Juggernaut, in Orissa, the greatest and most celebrated resort of pilgrims throughout India, of whose abominations the late Dr. Buchanan, an eye-witness, is well known to have given a most interesting and affecting account to the British public; and he adds, "There "are many more such places of great resort in the Deccan, "and the northern parts of Hindostan. Rules are laid "down for every pilgrimage to them, and various rewards "promised to those who perform them. Not only are "pilgrimages held beneficial both to the soul and body, "but such is the virtue ascribed to the sanctity of the "sacred places, that, by only naming them, men receive "remission of their sins; and on that account, great "persons, who are somewhat solicitous on this score, run "over the names of the principal of them, every morning, "as if they repeated a prayer; so that where a pilgrimage "cannot be conveniently undertaken, yet the benefit may "thus be secured:" and Mr. Grant then gives his authorities. See pp. 60 and 61. To this remarkable agreement between Pagan India, and Papal Ireland, may be added the pilgrimages of Mecca to the false prophet, in which the Mahometans place as much of their religion as the Irish do, and with equal warrant from Scripture. The Koran affirms that he who dies without performing this pilgrimage once in his life, may as well die a Jew, or a Christian! A square stone building, called the Caaba, is chiefly reverenced. Before Mahomet, the idolatrous Arabs worshipped there no fewer than 360 different images, all which were destroyed by Mahomet, who sanctified the spot, as the chief place of worship for all true believers: in other words, he changed the former idols for one idol—namely himself, precisely as the Romanists converted the old Pantheon to their own purposes. The several processions round the Caaba; the resort to the adjacent stations, and the ceremonies observed during the pilgrimage, as detailed in the Edinburgh Theological Dictionary, p. 633, bear so close a resemblance to the Irish observances, that I regret my limited space forbids my extracting the account. I only observe, with Dr. Johnson, that "he who thinks sin will be more freely pardoned by

"pilgrimage, dishonours, at once, his reason, and his religion." Now, what are the pilgrimages of Popery but the precise counterpart of the heathen pilgrimages? Not to enumerate the holy groves and waters of the Romish churches in Italy, Spain or France; what are the Pilgrimages of St. Patrick's Purgatory in Ireland, and her various Holy Wells, but so many idolatrous transcripts of the holy places of the first heathens, of the idolatrous Jews, of the modern Indians, and of the worshippers of the false prophet? The place in India which is "superlatively holy," may answer to the superlative holiness of St. Patrick's Purgatory, who is not only the titular saint of that nation, but is publicly called "the Apostle of Ireland" in the several advertisements which now announce, to the British public, his annual festival, although that public had till lately supposed that there were only twelve Apostles, no one of whom had any special commission for Ireland.* The

* See "the Life of St. Patrick, Patron, Primate, and Apostle of Ireland," published by Keating, London, a stock book in the Church of Rome, at this moment, although filled with all the incredible absurdities of the lives of saints, and with no small portion of blasphemy; among other instances of which, may be noticed the ascription of the title, "*the Lamb of God,*" to a Popish Bishop, named Sennachus.—One of the miracles ascribed to St. Patrick, among a thousand others equally outrageous, is, that he collected together from all parts of Ireland all its poisonous reptiles into one place, and then drove the whole swarm, by the mere power of his word, from a precipice, headlong into the ocean,—to say nothing of his turning some cheeses into stone, and his drowning, *tout d'un coup,* fifty armed men, who came to take his life, merely by stretching out his hand, and making a speech. Surely if certain right honourable senators would read this Life of St. Patrick, and other nonsense of the same school, they might find subjects more suited to the display of their talents than in the setting up of Popery, and the pulling down of the Church of England. The antiquarian reader need not be informed that Ledwich, Ryves, and Maurice, have thrown some reasonable doubts upon the very existence of such a personage as St. Patrick; and have sufficiently proved an alibi as to that portion of time which the Romish Church assigns as the period in which this reverend Patron, Primate, and Apostle flourished, and also as to some ages before and after it If, however, the Irish should succeed in retaining this saint in the Calendar, they must dispense with our faith in his stone cheese, and his convocation of toads and snakes!

rules laid down in India and Mecca for the government of the heathen pilgrims, may be compared with those prescribed for the conduct of the pilgrims in Ireland – they are alike destitute of, and opposed to, all true religion. Spiritual rewards are equally proposed by the Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan priests to their deluded followers for going upon these pilgrimages; and such journeys are deemed alike meritorious for delivering from the guilt of sin, and procuring the favour of God. The parallel further holds good in this particular, that it is not essentially necessary the poor devotee should perform this painful duty in person—he may do it, by doing something else: in India, by enumerating his bead-roll of sacred places; in Ireland, by providing a substitute to attend them, as in the case of the militia, upon the principle of "qui facit per alium, facit per se." Such are the gross delusions which are practised upon the credulous, and the ignorant, both in one and the other system—such the inevitable consequence of the absence of the light that "cometh down from above;" a light which cannot, indeed, burn where the revelation of God has never entered, but which has been awfully obscured, and well nigh extinguished, by the traditions and corruptions of designing and ungodly men, where it has appeared; a fact which leaves us in no doubt as to the real and sole cause of the solemn denunciations of the pope against all Bible Societies, and translations of the Scriptures. The Bible is too full and too plain against idolatry, in all its modifications, to suffer such a system of wickedness and darkness to exist, where it is generally received. That Dagon may be set up again and again by the priests, both of heathenism and of popery, as it has been from the beginning; but it never can stand for an instant beside the ark of God. It will still fall prostrate, headless, and dismembered, when put in competition with the knowledge and worship of Him who "is a Spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and in "truth." "If God's book," says Bishop Hall, "might "be in the hands of men, the religion of popery could not "be in their hearts. The concealment of Scripture breeds

" ignorance, and ignorance superstition. God never laid
" other foundation than in the prophets and apostles: upon
" their divine writings he meant to build his church, which
" he therefore inspired, that they might be like himself,
" perfect and eternal. Popery builds upon an unwritten
" word—the voice of old, but doubtful, traditions; the
" voice of the present Church, that is, as they interpret it,
" their's—with no less confidence and presumption of cer-
" tainty than any thing ever written by the finger of God.
" If this be not a new foundation, the old was no founda-
" tion. God never taught his church to know any other
" husband than Christ, to acknowledge any other head, to
" follow any other shepherd, to obey any other king.
" Popery offers to impose on God's church a king, shep-
" herd, head, husband, besides her own, a man, 'a man
" of sin:' he must know all things, can err in nothing;
" direct, inform, animate, command, both in earth and
" purgatory; expound scriptures, canonize saints, forgive
" sins, create new articles of faith; and, in all these, is
" absolute and infallible as his Maker. Who sees not,
" that if to attribute these things to the Son of God, be to
" make *him* the foundation of the church; then, to ascribe
" them to *another*, is to contradict him that said, 'Other
" foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which
" is Jesus Christ?' To lay a new foundation doth neces-
" sarily subvert the old."

In adverting to Bishop Hall, I cannot avoid taking this opportunity of calling the particular attention of all those Protestants (whether in or out of the Church of England) who profess to admire the evangelical doctrines, and practical piety, of our first reformers, and early theologians, to the decided protest which they all bore, as one man, against the usurpations and corruptions of popery both in religion and politics; and against the impolicy and absurdity of admitting such characters either into the temple, the senate, or the citadel. Modern reasoners indeed contend that popery is a different thing now from what it was then, and that its professors are altered for the better; but the *onus probandi* lies with those who make such asser-

tions: while, in proof of the contrary, we have only to consider, as human nature remains the same, that the spiritual abominations of the Church of Rome must be equally acceptable and palatable to the carnal heart; and that the actual proceedings of the head of that church, and of his agents, in our own time, afford the most effectual evidence of a design to establish the temporal power of the papacy upon the ruins of personal freedom, and the rights of conscience.

In spite, however, of this knowledge, and of these warnings, our Parliament has resolved on an experiment, the results of which are already developing themselves to their, and our, common confusion. A peculiar character of this grand error of all legislation is, that good, as well as bad, men consented to help it forward; but although it was competent to our legislators to give credit and currency to the political power of Popery, they had no more power to alter the religious character of that great apostasy, than they could alter the truth of divine revelation. The object of this little work is to show the depth of that apostasy, and its intimate connexion with that system of darkness and ignorance which preceded the coming of Christ.

LETTER XVI.

On the Alliance between the perpetual Sacrifices of Heathenism and the perpetual Sacrifice of the Mass.

I PROPOSE to show THE CONFORMITY BETWEEN THE PERPETUAL SACRIFICES OF HEATHENISM AND THE PERPETUAL SACRIFICE OF THE MASS. It is well known, that a main part of the corruption of true religion by the pagans was in their rite of sacrifice, which they derived originally from the Jews; to whom it was a divine appointment, and, when rightly understood, the standing type of that great sacrifice for sin, who should appear, in the fulness of time, to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself. The old Heathens corrupted and polluted this divine

rite, understood nothing of its spiritual import, and sacrificed to the false gods of their own idolatry; but not to the God of Israel, whom they neither loved, nor served, and "did not like to retain in their knowledge." In the early age of the christian church, sacrifice was of course unknown, since the advent of the expected Saviour had abrogated a rite, which, having reference to himself alone, was necessarily at an end when he appeared, who was the sum and substance of that, as of all the other types of the Jewish dispensation. When the Christian church corrupted herself, she came, among other errors, to hold the necessity of a perpetual sacrifice being offered on her altars, as had long been offered on the Jewish and Pagan altars; but it still appeared too gross and palpable a corruption to revert to sacrifices in their original form: how then was the difficulty to be overcome? She altered the external form of perpetual sacrifice, but retained the thing itself. The splendid and standing miracle of transubstantiation suggested an expedient, by which the material elements of bread and wine, being first changed by the power of the priest into the actual and proper body and blood of Christ, the participation by the priest of this sacrament, in the mass, should be considered as the offering up of the sacrifice of the Saviour afresh, as often as it should be so partaken of. It is well known that the vulgar phrase of *hocus pocus* owes its origin to the foreign mode of pronouncing the phrase *hoc est corpus*; and surely a finer juggle than transubstantiation never was invented. (See Archbishop Tillotson on this etymology.) Hence every mass of the Romish church is deemed, on account of the corporeal presence assumed to be in the sacrament, a proper sacrifice of Christ himself: and the Council of Trent accordingly, in its twenty-second session, defines the Mass to be "a true and proper sacrifice, truly and properly pro-"pitiatory, for the sins and punishment, the satisfactions "and necessities of the dead and the living; and that to "offer this true and proper sacrifice, our Saviour instituted "a true and proper priesthood, when he said, 'Do this in "remembrance of me.'" On the other hand, the Pro-

testant Church, although content in her Liturgy to admit with the primitive church that the holy eucharist is "a "sacrifice" in that large and extensive sense of the word in which the Bible terms *every* religious performance—our prayers, our praises, and even ourselves, sacrifices to God, yet she rejects, in common with the earliest antiquity, every such notion of the communion of Christ's body and blood as shall divest it of its simple, and sacramental character, and elevate it into a proper propitiatory sacrifice; a few scriptural reasons for which may thus be given:—1. St. Paul declares, "that without shedding of "blood there is no remission of sin;" therefore, since no blood is shed, there can be no remission of sin in the mass. 2. That "it was not needful that Christ should offer him-"self often, for then must he have often suffered." Christ then cannot offer himself without suffering; but he does not suffer in the mass, therefore is not offered. 3. That "by one oblation he hath for ever perfected them that are "sanctified;" therefore the sacrifice of Christ is not to be repeated, since a further oblation would be superfluous, which renders the pretended sacrifice of the mass, vain and useless. 4. That "where remission of sin is, there is "no more offering for sin." Now, the blood of Christ obtaining that remission, the sacrifice of the mass only derogates from the all-sufficiency of his true sacrifice on the cross. 5. The same apostle, speaking of Christ, says, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation." But no part of the Bible says either that he is to be continually set forth in the mass, as such propitiation, or that the mass itself is that propitiation. 6. The whole Epistle to the Hebrews shows that there is no priest under the gospel that can reconcile sinners to God, but Christ, nor any other than a commemorative sacrifice of his death in the Lord's supper. But the Romish church, and the Council of Trent, always define the priesthood as empowered to offer up to the Divine Majesty a real proper sacrifice, like the priests of old; forgetting that Christ, "being made a "Priest for ever, has, by one oblation of himself, once

"offered, made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, ob-
"lation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."
The New Testament knows nothing of sacrificing priests, any more than the Old does of an unbloody sacrifice. The Old Testament, indeed, appointed priests to offer sacrifices, as types, until our Lord should appear; and the New, records his appearance as the complete abrogation of those offerings. The Heathens possessed the form of a sacrificing priesthood, but wholly corrupted the ordinance. The Church of Rome revived, and continues, a sacrificing priesthood, though not with all its grossness of actual and sanguinary rites, having substituted in their place the sacrifice of the mass; only with this addition to the heathen superstition, that her sacrifice is for *the dead* as well as the living, in the same way as I have already shown the Indian Heathens to hold that the dead may be assisted by forms, as well as the living. The obvious and inevitable tendency of masses for the dead, is to encourage and sanction a vicious life. "To think," says Jeremy Taylor, "that any "suppletory to an evil life can be taken from such devo-
"tions as prayers for the souls of deceased sinners, may "encourage a bad man to sin, but cannot relieve him "when he hath." Rightly, therefore, does the Church of England maintain in her thirty-first Article that "the "offering of Christ, once made, is a proper redemption, "propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole "world, and that there is no other satisfaction for sin, but "that alone." That in the holy eucharist, the application of his death is made by faith to all such as receive it with true repentance, and hearty contrition, we undoubtedly believe; but that by that holy ordinance, as by "a true "and proper propitiatory sacrifice," we, or the priest for us, can appease God's wrath, perfect the obedience, or supply the necessities of others—of the dead as well as of the living—of those who are absent, as well as those who are present, we utterly deny, nor can any such impious and heretical doctrine ever be proved from Scripture. Redemption from sin, and its curse, can only be procured by

the sacrifice of the cross, nor can it be referred to any other, or meaner source, without derogating from the perfection of the Saviour's sacrifice, and invalidating the merits of that complete redemption which was there achieved for us men, and for our salvation, by him "who, his own-"self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree;" so that, (as Cranmer says,) "Now we may look for none other "priest, nor sacrifice, to take away our sins, but only him, "and his sacrifice:" (Cran. on Sac. p. 107.) There is nothing certainly more revolting to Scripture (as Bishop Hall has observed) that a priest should every day *make* his God, than that he should *sacrifice* him; and if a man can believe the one, because his church declares he must, he may as easily believe the other, and for the same reason, especially when her solemn curse is denounced upon his incredulity; for "If any man," says the wise and amiable Council of Trent, "shall say that the sacrifice of the mass "is only a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, let him be "accursed." (Sess. vi. c. 9.) Salmeron, and Baronius, indeed, the great advocates of the Romish church, alike admit, that there is no other foundation for the belief of the mass being this propitiatory sacrifice for the living and dead, than unwritten tradition; but upon such a sandy foundation is that church content to build this, as she does so many other of her pernicious doctrines.

Nothing, certainly, could have been better contrived to demonstrate the necessity, and exalt the authority, of a standing priesthood, than the introduction of such a mystery as transubstantiation into the simplest institution of Christianity. Thus, Burnet calls it "One of the designs "of the priests for establishing the authority of that "order, which, by its character, was qualified for the "greatest performance that ever was;" and he adds, "No "wonder they took all imaginable pains to infuse it into "the belief of the world. The plain institution of the sa-"crament was much vitiated with a mixture of many "*heathenish* rites and pomps, to raise the credit of the "priests, in whose hands that great performance was

"lodged; a great part of the service was secret, to make "it look like a wonderful charm. The consecration itself "was to be said very softly; for words that were not to be "heard, agreed best with a change that was not to be seen. "Masses were also said for all the turns and affairs of "human life. Trentals, a custom of having thirty masses "a year on the chief festivities, for redeeming souls out of "purgatory, was that which brought the priests most "money; for these were thought God's best days, in which "access was easier to him. On saints' days in the mass it "was prayed, that by the saints' intercession the sacrifice "might become the more acceptable, and procure a larger "indulgence; which could not be easily explained, if the "sacrifice was the death of Christ; besides a numberless "variety of other rites, so many of the relics of *heathenism* "were made use of, for the corrupting of the holiest insti-"tution of the Christian religion." (Bur. Ab. b. ii. p. 52.)

I cannot conclude this letter without reminding the British public of Dr. Watts's opinion of the mass, and its kindred errors—an authority, to which neither Protestant churchmen nor Dissenters will object, who remember what Dr. Johnson has transmitted to posterity respecting him—"Few men" (says he) "have left behind such monuments "of laborious piety. He has provided instruction for all "ages, from children who are lisping their first lessons, to "the enlightened readers of Malebranche, and Locke. He "has left neither spiritual nor corporeal nature unexa-"mined; he has taught the art of reasoning, and the "science of the stars." "How strange and unreasonable" (says Dr. Watts) "is the doctrine of the Popish church, "who, while they profess to believe the religion of Christ, "yet introduce many other methods of atonement for "sin, besides the sufferings of the Son of God, and the "atonement which Jesus has made. Every time they cele-"brate the Lord's Supper, and the priest communicates the "consecrated bread to his deluded followers, they suppose "there is a fresh propitiation made for sin; therefore they "call it the sacrifice of the mass, and imagine that their

" unscriptural representation of this holy ordinance is a real
" propitiation, not only for the sins of the living, but for
" those that are dead also. Whereas St. Paul assures us,
" Heb. ix. 28, ' Christ was *once* offered to bear the sins of
" many.' Heb. x. 14 ' By *one offering* he hath for ever
" perfected them that are sanctified.' This practice of
" theirs in the mass, looks something like a pretence of ho-
" nour, to the name and death of Christ, because they de-
" clare the mass is but, as it were, a repetition of the very
" sacrifice of Christ himself; but that is expressly contrary
" to the language of Scripture; for ' this man Jesus, after
" he had offered *one sacrifice* for sin, for ever sat down at
" the right hand of God;' Heb. x. 12; because his single
" sacrifice was all-sufficient, and needs no repetition.

" But, besides this, they have many other methods of
" atonement which men perform, and which they add to the
" atonement of Christ. What are all their imposed pe-
" nances—their pilgrimages on bare feet—the scourging of
" their own bodies—the garments of hair worn upon their
" flesh—and their multitude of repeated Latin prayers?
" What are they all, but toilsome and painful labours, in-
" vented by men to make atonement for the sins of the soul?

" Blessed be the name of our God, who has delivered
" our nation from this bondage of iniquity, from these foolish
" yokes and burdens of superstition; these profane disho-
" nours done to the sacrifice and atonement of Jesus our
" Saviour. We are ready to look on Popery now as lying
" afar off, across the seas, as an evil thing at a great distance,
" and are not so much impressed with a grateful sense of our
" preservation from it. We are too soon forgetful of our
" narrow escape from this mischief by the late Revolution,
" and the Protestant succession, by the arm of God, and by
" the best of kings, William our deliverer, and George our
" defender. Had it not been for these providences of Hea-
" ven, and these princes on earth, our land might have been
" filled with these superstitions, and they might have been
" imposed on us, under the penalties of imprisonment, and
" poverty, torment and death. And how could we stand in

"the fiery trial? Awake, O my heart, and let my tongue "awake into songs of praise and salvation, that I am not "tempted or compelled to disgrace the blood of my Sa-"viour, by having other atonements for sin imposed on my "conscience. And in the midst of thy praises to God, O "my soul, drop a tear of pity on thy brethren, who dwell "in the midst of these temptations: and in the language "of Christian sympathy, lift up a prayer to Heaven for "them, and say, How long, O Lord, how long?" (Watts's Works, vol. i. p. 411. edit. 1800.)

The office of the mass for the dead ought to be considered by all who call themselves Protestants. It perpetually recognises the efficiency and necessity of the intercession and mediation of the saints, and addresses them by name, such as the Virgin Mary, the Archangel and "Standard "Bearer," St. Michael, St. John Baptist, St. Peter, "and "all the saints;" among whom are enumerated on one occasion Ignatius—[*Quere*, the founder of the Jesuits?]—Alexander Marcellin, Felicitus, Perpetua, Agathy, Lucy, Agnes, Cecily, and Anastasia! Almost every prayer not only supposes such intercession and mediation of creatures essential and available, but also ranks as highly meritorious, and as one of the procuring causes of salvation, both the sacrifice of the mass, and the prayers offered for the dead on this occasion, to the virtual exclusion, or complete derogation, of the "one offering for sin once offered." Among other abominations, there is a sequence, as it is termed, beginning—

> "Dies iræ, dies illa
> Solvet sæclum in favilla
> Teste David cum Sybilla;"

which is thus translated on the opposite page:

> "The day of wrath, that dreadful day
> Shall the whole world in ashes lay,
> *As David and the Sybils say.*"

And pray, who are the Sybils? Alas! the religion of Heathenism will give us their history, and the religion of Po-

pery retains them in her service—so that the misguided devotees of the Romish church are required in the nineteenth century, and even in England, to believe the doctrine of the day of judgment, upon the authority of the Sybils! (See the Office of the Mass for the Dead, printed by Keating.)

LETTER XVII.

On the Agreement between Heathen and Romish Exorcism.

I PROPOSE to consider next, THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN HEATHEN AND ROMISH EXORCISM. The ancient idolaters, in forsaking the true God, both worshipped, and dreaded, the evil spirit. In proof of the first, St. Paul declares that they "sacrificed to devils, and not to God;" and the second is sufficiently manifest by their mistaken efforts to rid themselves of the real or fancied presence of dæmons, by imitating the false magicians of Egypt with their enchantments, and resorting to the practice of exorcism, for the purpose of dispossessing those who were under their influence. Pythagoras held, that dæmons inflicted diseases on men and cattle, (Diog. Laert. vit. Pythag.;) and the Greeks and Romans alike believed in malignant and benevolent spirits: of the former class were their Lymphatici, Cerriti, and Larvati, vide Plautus. Hor. et al.; and especially the first, in his Amphitruo, 2 2. 144. where the mode of ejecting the evil spirit is by lustration, as in Virgil's 6th Æneid; in other words, a purgation by holy water: "Quin tu isthanc jubes pro Cerrita circumferri?" "Why do you not order her to be exorcised as possessed?" Dæmoniacal possession was generally believed both by the Heathens and the Jews, and various were the modes observed for ejecting the evil spirit. In like manner, exorcism is common among the idolaters of India. "When a Hindoo "yawns," (says Mr. Grant, in his State of India laid before

the House of Commons, "he performs a short exorcism to "prevent the dæmon from seizing that opportunity of "entering into his body. Possessions are most firmly be-"lieved by them, and the appearance of them is not at all "uncommon." Let us see how this matter stands in the Romish church. She expressly believes in the continued possession of evil spirits, has an office in her ritual for exorcising them, and resolutely contends that her standing priesthood possesses the power of the first apostles in working this miracle, among others, down to our own day and time. I have lying before me a tract, written by the Rev. E. Peach, of Birmingham, in which he gives a circumstantial account of his casting out a devil at King's Norton, in Worcestershire. In the title-page, the miracle is called "A successful Exorcism," and the reverend gentleman expressly terms himself "the exorcist." He begins by observing, that possessions existed in the apostolic age, (about which there can be no doubt,) and he then asserts that the words of our Lord, "In my name they shall cast "out devils," "apply to those who shall believe in him *in* "*all succeeding ages*;" which may be just as truly asserted of raising the dead, and healing the sick, as of exorcism, or of any other miracle; and indeed the Romish church holds, that all those miracles have been performed by her clergy, and will be, to the end of time. He then declares that "the "power of exorcising, has from the earliest ages been con-"ferred on those who entered into the ministry;" speaks with sarcastic contempt of "the new acquired lights which "the *glorious* Reformation spread over the minds of men," and plainly charges infidelity on such as will not believe these things; observing, "that if our Saviour was to ap-"pear again on the earth, his wonderful works would make "no greater impression on the minds of these enlightened "men, than they did on the incredulous high priest and "pharisees." Let us, however, come to the statement itself, which he calls "a sign for unbelievers, and an effect of the "promise of Christ." Some time, it seems, after Easter, 1815, the reverend gentleman was applied to by the friends

of a young woman, a Protestant, who had been married in the beginning of the preceding Lent, and on the day after her marriage became suddenly delirious, and declared that a multitude of infernal spirits surrounded her, with whom she must go, and she threatened self-destruction: this had lasted for two months, when her medical attendant declared, that in all probability she could not survive twenty-four hours. The clergyman of the parish was accordingly called in, but finding the case past his art, he departed: at length, however, a Catholic woman made a tender of her services, which were accepted, when lo, she procured some holy water, with which she made the sign of a cross upon the patient's forehead, who declared she was scalded, but forthwith fell into a gentle sleep. On awaking, the Catholic put holy water into her mouth, on which she said her throat was scalded, but in a few minutes, fell into a comfortable sleep for some hours. Next morning more holy water was applied, which gave ease, and from that time the danger of death decreased. She then enjoyed (the writer says) lucid intervals, and invariably after the application of holy water fell into a slumber. (Perhaps the gentle reader will think that she was not the first who has been sent to sleep, again and again, by holy water.) It is, however, time that the exorcist himself should now make his appearance. He did not, it seems, attend on the first application: at length, however, on Tuesday in Rogation week, he set out, a special messenger having stated that the patient was in a worse condition than ever. ("Nec Deus intersit nisi dignus vindice nodus.") It was, he says, the most awful visit he ever made; for during his walk of six miles, and while he remained, it thundered incessantly. She required two persons to keep her in bed, before he entered, but though she could not see him, she then required three, and (still without seeing him) said, she knew who he was, and gradually revived. He then explained some of the articles of the Romish faith, and assured her that *she must believe the holy Catholic church, before she could obtain relief*; which she at once declared she did, and had done from the moment she knew

what holy water was, and experienced its effects. She then pronounced a long panegyric on it; said she was not delirious, but knew and remembered all that had passed; upon which he dipped his finger into the holy water, and made the sign of the cross on her forehead, which she again declared scalded her. The Lord's Prayer was then repeated; but when the patient came to the petitions, she fell into convulsions, and could hardly articulate; after which the exorcisms began, through the whole of which, every limb and joint was agitated and convulsed, and "it required," says the reverend gentleman, "constant attention to keep her covered;" in the mean time, he adds, "the lightning was "flashing, and the thunder rolling, and I, with an impera-"tive voice, commanding the evil spirit to reply to my in-"terrogatories, and to go forth from her." No wonder that, under such circumstances, his flesh should creep, and his hair stand on end, as he then assures us was the case. However, the whole being duly concluded, the patient became calm, and in a few minutes conversed with the same ease as before! She was then baptized into the Romish church; and the exorcist says, he repeated several acts of contrition, during which, he says, she trembled like a leaf, and again said, the holy water gave her as much pain as boiling water. Immediately after the ceremony, she conversed with all the cheerfulness of a person in perfect health and spirits, took her tea, was next day down stairs perfectly well, and has been so ever since. The reverend gentleman then proceeds to designate the Protestant religion as "a sect," and dilates on the surprising efficacy of what he terms "mere salt and water blessed by a Catholic priest." He then adverts to "the super-enlightened men of the age," as likely to turn away from such a story, as beneath their notice; nor indeed does any very superior degree of light appear necessary to produce such a consequence. In an Appendix he states, that having visited his patient upwards of a year afterwards, she told him that she knew nothing at all about the Catholic religion, but was convinced that it was the truth, and would acquire a know-

ledge of it, as soon as possible; upon which, he promised to send her books of instruction, and left with her two copies of the account of her own exorcism—I presume, in order to her more speedy conversion; and he sums up the whole by a solemn declaration, that the ministers of his own church have *inherited the powers granted by Christ to his apostles!!* It is important to observe, that this miracle of Mr. Peach is highly extolled by the Roman Catholics of England, and was recorded with admiration by the editors of two monthly Popish journals published in this Protestant metropolis!!! *Qui vult decipi—decipiatur.*

LETTER XVIII.

The Agreement between Heathen and Romish Exorcism further considered, with a Refutation of the pretended Continuance of this and other Miracles in the Church of Rome.

In the foregoing relation of casting out a devil by a modern priest of the church of Rome, we observe a very convenient and summary mode adopted by him of getting over the objections which Scripture and reason, alike, present against continued miracles—that is, to brand all who do not believe them as infidels. This is the old artifice of the Romish church as to transubstantiation, purgatory, the Church's infallibility, the saving nature of their seven sacraments, and so forth; in all these cases, as in that of miracles, if a man will not take the testimony of tradition, or rather of the priesthood, he is an infidel and a heretic, and so they consider there is an end of the argument; but the fact is, it is such monstrous corruptions of truth as these, which make infidels; it is when the fair form of a scriptural faith comes to be tricked out in such false and mere-

tricious frippery, that many persons of good sense in the Roman Catholic church, conceive disgust, and are repelled, even at the threshold of such a creed, from proceeding to examine, and embrace it. That which is only above reason, but without being repugnant to it, such as is the religion of the Gospel, has found humble and honest believers, even in the strongest, and most cultivated minds: what has been both below reason, and contrary to it, as are so many doctrinal errors of the Romish church, has doubtless driven multitudes, in every age and nation, into the darkness and wickedness of atheism, or deism, as a refuge from such a religion as that of popery; while such as have chosen to take their religion upon trust, and to believe all that a corrupt church has prescribed, have rested, like the Jews of old, in the false security of external forms, and been any thing else than the spiritual worshippers required by that Gospel which declares, that "except a man be born again, he cannot "enter into the kingdom of God"—a birth, not merely by the baptism of water into a visible church, but by the baptism of the Spirit also, into an invisible church. To such formalists, the reproof of our Lord to the Jews, applies with equal force: "In vain do they worship me, "teaching for doctrines, the commandments of men." With regard to the reverend writer's declaration, that if our Saviour were to appear again on earth, his miracles would make no impression on certain persons—if he mean to include in this sweeping clause, the Protestant church, which he afterwards terms "a sect," he may be briefly answered, that it is simply because the miracles of our Lord do make an impression on members of that church, that they refuse to believe in all the forgeries and falsehoods which have been since attempted to be added to them. The two main fallacies of the Birmingham high priest, as of his church, are—1st, his erroneous interpretation of Scripture, by which he would prove that our Lord's gift of miracles to his first followers descended in succession *to the end of the world*, and that such succession is only in the

Romish priesthood; and, 2ndly, that, among other splendid miracles, this of casting out devils is a certain proof of Divine doctrine. As to the first error, this is just as reasonable a notion as that the gift of tongues was to continue in the church, and can be as easily proved:—"All those "acts," says Bishop Hall, "which proceeded from super- "natural privilege, ceased with their cause: who now "dare undertake to continue them, unless bold papists, "who have brought in gross magic, instead of miraculous "authority?" (See his Letter to the Bishop of Worcester.) And again, "Why should any in these latter times chal- "lenge a right of succession in one miracle, and not claim "it in another? All these were given with one and the "same breath, continued by the same power, and called in, "and stinted, by the same Providence, with their fellow "miracles." (Invis. World, B. iii. s. 9.) The limiting of the performance of these wonders to the Romish priesthood, was an admirable expedient for keeping the lower world in awe, and subjecting all mankind to the dominion of an ecclesiastical tyranny. 2nd. If the Romish church could even succeed in proving that the miracle of casting out devils were now in her hands, (which she never can,) she would be no nearer to the proof of her own infallibility, or perfection. The magicians of Egypt certainly did some wonders; but they were still false prophets, while Moses was the true. The corrupt Jews had their exorcists, as Christ plainly intimates—"If I by Beelzebub "cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them "out?" We read also, in the Acts, of "vagabond Jews," who were "exorcists;" and Josephus relates, (Antiq. l. viii. c. 2,) that he saw the Jew Eleazer casting out devils by the help of a magical ring, in the presence of Vespasian and his army. Thus also the disciples told their Lord, that they had seen one "casting out devils in his name, who "followed not with them." So far is such a testimony (even if its present existence could be proved) from affording a criterion of a true church, that the same gift to Judas did not prove him a true disciple, but still left him

a false one. Well, therefore, might our Lord say, "In "this, rejoice not, that the spirits are subject to you, but "rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." Gifts and graces are very distinct things. Moses assigns an infallible test by which the truth of a creed or doctrine may be tried, viz. whether the party working a miracle in its favour, enforces the worship of the true God, or not. If not, his miracle is fallacious, and his condemnation certain. (See Deut. xiii. 1. 5.) Thus our Lord foretold of false Christs, and false prophets, whose signs and wonders should even be great, and the ancient prophet points out the only proper test of miraculous pretensions.—"To the "law and to the testimony, if they" (the performers of miracles,) "speak not according to this word, it is because "there is no light in them." (Is. viii. 20.) The true and golden rule in this matter is furnished by Justin Martyr: "How shall it be known that our miracles are better than "the heathen's?" the answer to which is, "By the faith "and worship of the true God"—in adverting to which, Bishop Hall observes, "Miracles must be judged by the "doctrine they confirm; not the doctrine, by the miracles. "The dreamer or prophet must be esteemed, not by the "event of his wonder, but by the substance and scope of "his teaching. The Romanists argue preposterously while "they would prove the truth of their church by miracles; "whereas they should prove their miracles by the truth. "For example: That power cannot know the prayer, "which knows not the heart: either then the Virgin is "God, for that she knows the heart; or to know the heart, "and so our prayers, is falsely ascribed to the Virgin; and "therefore the miracles which teach men thus to honour "her, are teachers of lies, and so, not of God. If the "practice of worshipping the Virgin be bad, God deliver "me from the immediate author of these miracles. Change "but one idol for another, and what differ the wonders of "Apollo's Temples from those of Romish Chapels."—(Epistles.)

The sentiment of St. Chrysostom is important to show

that modern pretensions to miraculous powers will no more prove the church of Rome a true church, than the want of those powers will prove the church of England a false church. "*Once*" (says he) "it was known by miracles "who were true Christians, and who were false: but *now* "the power of working miracles is *wholly taken away*— "the pretence of it is to be found amongst those who pre-"tend to be Christians:" with this, agrees the opinion of Augustine, who observes, "against those *miracle-mongers*, "God has put me upon my guard, by admonishing me "that in the last days, there shall arise false prophets who "shall work such signs and wonders as to deceive, if pos-"sible, the very elect." And in like manner Calvin remarks—"To demand miracles of us is highly wrong; "for we have not been the inventors of a new gospel, but "we retain that very gospel which has for its confirmation "all the miracles which Christ and his apostles have "wrought."

I would here observe, that a Romish bishop (as well as a Romish priest) has also ventured to put the credulity of some persons, and the patience of others, to the test by publishing in this Protestant nation an account of another miracle performed at a holy well in Staffordshire, and attested by himself, as if to try how far the public mind would endure the exhibition of so much absurdity, and no doubt as a prelude to future experiments upon their common sense and their forbearance. See "Authentic Docu-"ments relative to the miraculous Cure of Winifred "White, at St. Winifred's Well, by the Right Rev. John "Milner, D.D. Vicar Apostolic."

I conclude by observing, that a man who chooses to take his religion from the Holy Scriptures may believe all things necessary to his salvation, without being an infidel, although he does not believe that the priests of the Church of Rome can cast out devils, raise the dead, heal the sick, speak with divers tongues, change common water into holy, or convert the material elements of bread and wine into the actual body and blood of our adorable Lord. Further, that so

far from its being capable of proof that all, or any, of these miracles have been performed since the Apostolic age, the gross artifices and foul falsehoods of which the Church of Rome has been openly convicted, in innumerable instances, when attempting to palm such miracles upon the world, in support of her own pretensions, afford the best proof of the apostasy and corruption of a church which could condescend to stoop to such base and unhallowed expedients; that it is to the endless additions which have been made to the simplicity of the gospel of Christ by the craft of designing men, that such characters must refer the greatest portion of the infidelity which has been found amongst men; that it is to their suppression of the Bible, that they must ascribe the awful ignorance which has prevailed in the world; and to their Pagan principles, and pliant morals, that they must attribute the actual portion of vice and immorality which have been ever found in connexion with their own, and every other, system of darkness and error.

Finally, if the pretended workers of such miracles as these, claiming as they do to be the true successors of the apostles, do not come under the description and condemnation of the apostle in 2 Corinthians, ch. xi. ver. 13, 14, 15, language should seem to have lost its meaning.*

* It would seem as if some of the laity of the Romish church in Ireland were at length disgusted and wearied with the spiritual yoke of a profligate and venal priesthood. In a meeting at Cavan (Thomas M'Cabe, Esq. in the chair) of a large assembly of Catholic Laymen, Dr. M'Donald stated (without contradiction) that "notorious and flagrant abuses had long existed"—that "scandalous lives rendered "men unfit for the ministry of the Gospel"—that "a superstition of "the most monstrous and detestable description, which would have "dishonoured and disgraced the most barbarous ages, had taken firm "root"—that "*the exclusive right of working miracles* was now laid claim "to by men of the most infamous and profligate characters, who are "not only a dishonour to religion, but a disgrace to human nature; "some of whom are so far gone in folly as well as depravity, as to "make religion pander to their avarice and profligacy"—and he declared there were then present the most respectable persons ready to attest the truth of his assertion. The speaker roundly asserted that "it is in vain to look for reformation from any exertion of the clergy."

LETTER XIX.

On the Analogous Nature of the Expiation of Sin by Money, in the Heathen and Romish Churches—and the Analogy between other Pagan and Papal Atonements for Sin—the Conformity between the Stories of the Pagan Deities, and the Romish Saints—between the Ancient and Modern Idolatry in producing actual Vice—between Abstinence from Food in the two Systems—and between the supreme Power of the respective Priesthoods.

THE ANALOGY BETWEEN THE HEATHEN AND ROMISH METHODS OF EXPIATING OFFENCES BY MONEY, OR BY ITS WORTH, may be next considered. The tax-book of the Romish Chancery presents the following bead-roll of crimes, and their pecuniary commutations:—

	£	s.	d.
For procuring abortion	0	7	6
For simony	C	10	6
For sacrilege	0	10	6
For perjury in a criminal case	0	9	0
For robbery	0	12	0
*For burning a neighbour's house	0	12	0

This meeting produced a great sensation in Ireland, and may perhaps be the occasion finally of driving the idolatrous priests of Baal, not only out of the diocese of Kilmore, but out of a country which has too long groaned under the tyranny of these modern Popes; whose ignorance and vice would furnish, at this moment, details as awful and disgusting as those which are recorded of the period immediately preceding our own Reformation in England.

* A horrid trial occurred on occasion of the house of one Lynch having been burnt in Ireland by Devan, the clerk of the Romish chapel near it, who mustered the conspirators in that building, when eight

For defiling a virgin	0	9	0
For incest with the nearest relatives .	0	7	6
For murdering *a layman* . . .	0	7	6
For keeping a concubine . . .	0	10	6
For laying violent hands on a clergyman	0	10	6
For forging letters apostolical . .	1	7	0

I dare not add to the above list certain other offences which are not calculated to meet the public eye; but I ask, what are these sums levied by the court of Rome on the commission of particular sins, but so many licenses to commit them? and what is such a taxation but an ecclesiastical encouragement by the Pope, and his agents, for the commission of crimes for which absolution can be afterwards purchased, at as easy a rate as the license itself?

The idolatry of India presents, in its native code, the following scale for scandalous expressions:—One of equal rank with the accused, shall be fined 2*l.*; an inferior 4*l.*; a superior 1*l.* For absolution of the crime of perjury, the offender shall perform worship to the goddess Jershuttee. False testimony may be given to preserve life, but if a man have murdered a Brahmin, he shall be punished by not being allowed to give false witness to save life. The crime of adultery may be committed for about 1*s.* Procuring the death of an innocent person, about 1*l.* Where a man is capitally convicted, he shall pay 150*l.* to escape death; half that sum when his sentence is dismemberment; and a fourth when it is banishment. Much more might be added, but

human beings, among whom were some unoffending children, perished in the flames; one of the witnesses on which trial deposed, that he "swore "on his knees to aid and assist the Catholics; never to deal with a "Protestant, if he could get what he wanted from a Catholic, and to "assist the cause with *person* and *pocket*." Is it too much to suppose that the *absolution* of the Romish church stood these offenders in stead, now that the *Taxatio cameræ apostolicæ* is no longer in force; and that the certainty that pardon might be obtained on confession, if it did not present an actual inducement to the commission of such an atrocious outrage, must at least have facilitated its commission by removing some of those terrors which a sense of future responsibility rarely fails to excite?

the short remark of Mr. Grant may suffice: "Immoralities of every description are tolerated on easy terms to one part of society, and some of the most atrocious crimes have all the encouragement which a legal sanction can give them." (See Mr. Grant's work on India, p. 58.)

THE ANALOGY BETWEEN PAGAN AND PAPAL ATONEMENTS FOR SIN AS SO MANY ENCOURAGEMENTS TO SIN, may be next adverted to. Mr. Grant's book on India lying before me, I proceed to adduce instances to this point from modern heathenism, although the whole religion of ancient idolatry was one continued round of external expiation for sin. "The Hindoos," says Mr. Grant, "are taught to have recourse to various ceremonial works and observances, and confidently to depend on these for absolution; real contrition and amendment, hatred of evil, and a respect to the holiness of the divine nature, do not appear to enter into their consideration of this subject. The whole is reduced to certain external performances; and in the Vedas, (the sacred books,) there are long enumerations of every species of offence which men can commit, with the particular expiation prescribed for each. In general, these expiations consist in pilgrimages, in living and dying in places reputed holy, in ablutions, in penances, in the celebration of festivals, in fasts, in largesses to Brahmins, in sacrifices and offerings to idols, in anointing the body with the excrements of a cow, and in other expedients of a similar nature." (Ibid. p. 59.) He then particularizes holy rivers, and holy places, on which I have enlarged before; and distinctly enumerates, under separate heads, offerings, festivals, almsgiving, endowments to the priests and to pagodas, rigorous penances, religious services for the dead, and works of supererogation. Now let any man only take the trouble of comparing the above heathen rites and observances with those of Popery, and he cannot fail at once to perceive the close similarity which obtains between them; indeed, the connexion is so obvious, that in the summary given by Mr. Grant, of the abominable superstitions of the Indian idolatry, he

does not fail to hold up that connexion, with adequate reprobation, to the view of the British parliament, and public. "In short," says he, "the modes of expiating "guilt, and of acquiring merit, are endless among "this people. To accomplish this end is the business "of all their vast train of ceremonies, services, and ex- "ternal performances; it is the very thing that has upheld "the fabric of Hindoo superstition, and has perpetuated the "credulity of the multitude, and the impostures of their "priests." (Ibid. p. 61.) Again, "Upon the whole then "it appears, that the Hindoos pursue methods of ob- "taining pardon of sin, without regard to the disposi- "tion of the mind, or the conduct of life. On their "own principles, they may go on committing wilful of- "fences every day, and as regularly wiping them off, and die "at last pure, and in peace, and pass through the water of "the Ganges to happiness in a new state.* For the viola- "tions of conscience, which, though smothered, is not ex- "tinct; for the disregard of truth, of justice, and of "mercy, their system has enabled them, without making "any, the slightest, compensation to men, to give sufficient "satisfaction to their gods. To them they pay a certain "quit-rent, or acknowledgment, for liberty to do whatever "their inclination and ability may prompt them to, as far as "their fellow-creatures are concerned. Can we hesitate to "say what must be the effect of such principles on their "character? Among such a people, crimes must prevail. "True it is, and greatly to be lamented, the prevalence of "crimes is no new thing, nor peculiar to them. The an- "cient world exhibited a picture of the same kind; and to "the dishonour of the Christian name, in countries nearer "home, that pure religion has been changed into a mys- "tery of imposture, and corruption. But, though it must "be said, that the light which overspreads Europe, has "prevented the same degree of effect from the system of

* Extreme unction being here read, for sacred water, we have the analogy complete.

"delusive fraud still practised there, yet have not the con-
"sequences been infinitely prejudicial to those countries
"where it has prevailed; and is not that system likely, in
"the end, to dissolve the frame of society in them." (Ib.
p. 62.) I apprehend that the necessary tendency of Popery,
like heathenism, to favour and propagate every species of
vice and immorality, can hardly be better described.

THE CONFORMITY BETWEEN THE STORIES OF THE PAGAN DEITIES AND THE ROMISH SAINTS may be here adduced, not because it has been omitted before, but because the example of heathen India affords further confirmation of the evidence supplied from ancient idolatry. In speaking of the Hindoo deities, Mr. Grant observes—"The le-
"gends and histories of their actions are innumerable, and
"in the highest degree extravagant, absurd, ridiculous, and
"incredible;" (ibid. p. 64.); a remark which will serve, without the alteration of a word, to describe the shameless delusions recorded in the lives of the Romish saints and martyrs, for the belief of the world; while such as do not choose to believe them, are branded as infidels.

THE CONFORMITY BETWEEN THE ANCIENT AND MODERN IDOLATRY IN PRODUCING ACTUAL VICE, may introduce the masterly description of idolatry, and its consequences, which is briefly given by Mr. Grant. "The
"worship and ceremonies," says he, "practised by the
"Hindoos, with various circumstances appertaining to
"them, have the effect of vitiating, as well as of stupifying
"their minds. In an enlightened land, it may appear
"superfluous formally to state, that such are the conse-
"quences of idolatry; but that which is admitted, it may
"be well also, to recollect and to view, as exemplified in
"practice. The divine nature is infinitely degraded by
"every material representation; and the man already so
"gross as to resort to one, becomes more gross in using it.
"If he does not at length drop the idea of a distinct invi-
"sible Power, and think only of the object before him, (as
"there is reason to suspect he will,) he at least believes that
"his God inhabits the stock or the stone which he has set

"up. European apologists for so monstrous a practice "have been willing to deny this idea of idolatry; but an "evidence of far superior authority, the author of the "Bhagvad, asserts its reality. He introduces Crishna, "who is there represented with supreme authority, saying, "'The ignorant believe me, who am invisible, to exist in "'the visible form under which they see me.' And the "learned translator of the Bhagvad is of opinion, that it was "one of the aims of that work, to induce men to believe "the supreme God, present in every image before which "they bent. *Between depraved opinions entertained of "the Divine Being, and depraved practice, there is a "necessary and inseparable connexion.* Those opinions "originate from corruption; and he who makes a god for "himself, will certainly contrive to receive from him an "indulgence for his corrupt propensities." (Ib. p. 65.)

THE SIMILARITY BETWEEN THE TALISMANS OF HEATHENISM AND POPERY is remarkable. The old heathens had their portable gods, as well as their domestic ones; and some charm or other against evil was commonly worn about their persons. Thus it is with the modern heathens in India. "With incantations," says Mr. Grant, "may be classed the endless variety of charms, spells, ta-"lismans, amulets, and other inventions of this nature, "of which no individual, small or great, of all the mil-"lions of the Hindoo race, is destitute;" (p. 68;) and now, only let an honest inquirer after truth take up one of the Romish scapularies, which are publicly sold, and given, by the Romish priests, all over Ireland, to their miserable devotees, and let him honestly say, whether there is any difference between them, and the talismans of ancient and modern heathenism; let him only consult the account of the Romish scapulary, which is printed at Cork, and well known throughout Ireland, and say, whether he must not turn from such a collection of lies, with a disgust approaching to horror, more especially when he considers, that the falsehoods in question are calculated, like the other miracles of the Romish church, to support a system of doctrine

fallacious in itself, and destructive to the souls of thousands.

THE SIMILARITY BETWEEN ABSTINENCE FROM FOOD IN THE SYSTEMS OF PAGANISM AND POPERY may next be noticed.—Mr. Grant observes of the Indian Heathens, "The ceremonies which respect the article of "food alone, might form a volume." (Ibid. p. 71.) And again he says, the Vedas prescribe "a purification of "three paraccas; that is, a total abstinence for twelve "days and nights, as setting free from all sins, however "heinous." (Ibid. p. 59.) The analogy between heathenism and popery, in this particular, will readily occur to all. It would be at once beside my purpose, and unnecessary to my argument, to show, that fasting was a *malum in se:* but in the abuse to which both heathenism and popery have alike subjected it, no true Christian can for a moment entertain a doubt that the corruption of each system, in this particular, has been identical. The mortification of the body (intended only, originally, as the means to an end) has, in either case, been deemed expiatory for the sin of the soul; and Papists, like the Heathens, and Jews of old, have chosen rather to challenge Heaven, on the score of their own meritorious fastings, and pharisaical righteousness, than to submit to that moral renovation of heart and life which alone are designated in the Scriptures by the name of religion.

The last point of resemblance between heathenism and popery to which I shall advert, is THE SUPREME POWER AND PARAMOUNT INFLUENCE OF THEIR RESPECTIVE PRIESTHOODS, although this point has been noticed before. The priests of the ancient idolatry were the life and soul of a system which originated with, and mainly subsisted for, themselves. The duties which they inculcated, and the penances which they prescribed, emanated from a common source, and depended upon the credit in which the order which established them was enabled to stand with the world around. Hence the priests alone, blind as they were, were the authorized guides of the

blind, and teachers of the ignorant. They kept the people in utter ignorance, and virtually encouraged them in sin. They forged miracles to attest their own authority, and retained, in willing subjection, a world lying in wickedness, whom they had first succeeded in convincing that they were themselves essential to human happiness here, and endless immortality hereafter. Thus is fear, but not love, the bond between the priest, and the people, of Ireland. But let us again hear Mr. Grant on the subject of the priests of paganism; and the conformity between themselves, and their brethren of another system, will be apparent:—"The absolute dominion which this religion "gives to the Brahmins over the rest of the people must "have forced itself upon the attention. No similar in-"vention among men seems to have been so long, and so "completely, successful. This success may be accounted "for, partly, from a favourable concurrence of various "circumstances; but, chiefly, from the character of the "religion itself. Erected upon the darkest ignorance, and "the boldest falsehood, it has been the work of ages to "strengthen these foundations, and to render the fabric "impregnable. The understanding is chained, and kept in "perpetual imprisonment, like dreaded rivals for power in "the East, who, deprived of their eyes, and immured in "dungeons, received poisoned provisions from the gaoler's "hands. Every avenue which might lead to emancipation "is strongly guarded. Fear is immeasurably excited, and "incessantly wrought upon; not a rational fear of falling "into moral evil, and offending the righteous and holy "Sovereign of the universe, but a fear of numberless ficti-"tious dangers from every part of nature, from things "real and imaginary, in every situation, and in every "transaction. Fear is the grand instrument by which "these poor people are held down, never daring to "examine into the reality of what they are told is im-"pending over them. False hope is likewise held out to "them; and they are taught to seek deliverance, safety, "and happiness, in a multitude of unmeaning, fantastic

"ceremonies, which constitute a grievous drudgery, en-
"grossing their time, and confining their thoughts. In all
"these rites, and in whatever regards the civil and per-
"sonal, as well as the religious concerns of the Hindoos,
"the Brahmins (or priests) have made themselves indis-
"pensably necessary. They formed the religion, they are
"the sole exclusive depositaries of its ordinances, they are
"the expounders of them, they are the sole ministers,
"either officiating or directing, in all the vast train of
"ceremonies, observances, ablutions, defilements, purifica-
"tions, penances, and works of supererogation, of which
"their religion consists." (Ibid. p. 73.) Only apply all this to Ireland, and the analogy will be obvious.

I cannot conclude this Letter without a single quotation from our own Spenser, illustrative of the specious and rotten fabric of popery:—

> "It was a goodly heap for to behold,
> "And spake the praises of the workman's wit,
> "But all great pity that so fair a mould
> "Did on so weak foundation ever sit:
> "For on a sandy hill that still did flit,
> "And fall away, it mounted was full high,
> "That every breath of Heaven shaked it;
> "And all the hinder parts that few could spy,
> "Were ruinous and old, but painted cunningly."
>
> FAIRY QUEEN, Book i. Canto 4.

LETTER XX.

Concluding Reflections on the preceding Facts.

A FEW reflections to which the foregoing remarks have given rise are;—

1. The Church of Rome, in vaunting of her antiquity, proves rather too much for her purpose. She is indeed

of very ancient origin, for she is older than Christianity *itself, and as old as paganism, her twin sister.* It is easy to understand upon what principle the idolatry and superstitions of paganism were at first adopted, and are still continued, by the Church of Rome: they present something tangible, and visible, for the external senses to rest upon, in the place of that spiritual change of heart which the Bible, in all its parts, supposes as essential to salvation. Christianity, in its pure and primitive structure, had no charms for those pagans who had been accustomed to an imposing exterior of forms and ceremonies, which, while they amused their minds, and pacified their consciences, required no peculiar sacrifices, and left them in undisturbed possession of their former sins. The Church of Rome, aware of this fact, entered accordingly into a compromise with the old idolatry. Her object was secular dominion, and while this might be attained, she regarded the illumination, and conversion, of the world but as secondary objects, or rather as things more likely to obstruct her schemes of worldly policy, than to advance them. No writer has better established this fact than the celebrated Gale, (in his "Court of the Gentiles,") who, after proving, with extensive erudition, how paganism and popery symbolized in a variety of particulars, observes, "The carnal "professors of Christianity, who were most numerous, "were not content to part with their pagan rites; where-"fore, to compromise the matter, they turned their pagan "rites into Christian solemnities, and so christened their "dæmon festivals under the name of some Christian martyr "and saint; and that which made this design more plau-"sible was this—some groundless hopes, by such symbo-"lizing with the pagans, to gain them over to embrace the "Christian religion, *which vain attempt was so far "blasted by God, as that it proved but a door to let in "Antichrist, and all his idol worship into the Church "of Rome.*" Human nature being the same in every age, there is no doubt that the idolatries and superstitions of the Romish Church have, from the earliest period of her

history, had the force of retaining within her visible pale a vast majority in succession, who, *if they had not been* nominal Christians, would have been professed infidels, but who found in the round of external and pharisaical observances which Popery prescribes, a sedative for their fears, and a substitute for their piety. The Reformed churches of the Continent, and of this country, have protested, with vigour and effect, against a system which, while it is eminently calculated to amuse the multitude by a specious exterior, is no less adapted to hold them in spiritual bondage, by blinding their minds, and sensualizing their hearts—by giving them the shadow of religion instead of its substance, and by setting up a variety of idols in the place of the one, true, and living God of the Scriptures.

2. With what injustice does the Church of Rome charge her younger sister, the Protestant Church, with heresy! the translators of the English Bible observe on such a charge in their preface:--" Heretics they call us, by the " same right that they call themselves Catholics, both being " wrong." The continued determination of the Romish church, in all her official acts, down to this hour, to brand every Protestant with the title of a heretic, and, by a necessary consequence, to hold him amenable to all her severe, and unrepealed, laws against heretics, is the best evidence of what may be expected from the operation of a persecuting spirit, if the power of exercising it were again to occur; and this observation will hold good, notwithstanding all that may be asserted to the contrary, either by Roman Catholics who are not empowered to answer for their own church, or by Protestants who are still less empowered, and the majority of whom are altogether ignorant both of the principles, and practices, of that church whose cause they unwittingly advocate. As far, indeed, as the Church of England is concerned with the charge of heresy, she needs no other defence than that with which the apostle has supplied her: " This I confess unto thee, that after the way

"which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my "Fathers." (Acts xxiv. 14.)

3. The perilous nature of such a profession as that of popery to its members is great indeed, since the very foundation of her whole system is laid in the virtual rejection of the two first commands in the Decalogue. That multitudes who live and die in the communion of the Church of Rome do yet escape the contagion of their own creed, and are preserved by the special grace of God, sincere and exemplary Christians, is readily admitted; but it is no less true, that the whole machinery of the system erected by that church, is opposed to the Scriptures of truth, and only designed to exalt the authority of a secular priesthood, and to keep the world in perpetual ignorance and error; and in point of fact, the Church of Rome, by engrafting on the native stock of Christianity the most awful depravation of doctrine, has overspread the world at large with a proportionate corruption in practice.

4. The agreement which has been shown to exist between the worship of false gods, as exhibited in the pagan and papal religions, and the worship of the true God, as revealed in the religion of the Holy Scriptures, speaks loudly to those nominal professors of Protestantism who are wearing their own religion much too loosely about them to stand in a posture for public or private trial; nay, who may even be halting between two opinions; and, amidst the increased exertions for converts now making by the Church of Rome, are almost disposed to go over to "the "old religion," as it is triumphantly called by its advocates, and (as we have seen) most truly called, although in a sense which they will be very unwilling to allow. Certainly, as far as the great interests of truth are concerned, the Protestant cause will gain as little by the adherence, as it will lose by the defection, of such nominal professors, while to themselves, individually, it will be of little importance in which rank they are found at last: but their present ignorance of the religion into which they were baptized,

and of that to which they are invited, may justify anxiety on their own account. If they determine for the Protestant faith, let them at least understand to what it is they adhere, and if for the Popish, to what it is they depart.

5. It is impossible to close this parallel between Heathenism and Popery, without remarking that where the Bible is wholly unknown, as in the heathen world, or only partially known, as in the Popish church, idolatry and superstition are inevitable. This happy and highly favoured country has, of late, been invited (though not by the voice of authority) to commemorate the tercentenary of the English Reformation, inasmuch as on Sunday, the 4th of October, 1835, precisely three centuries had elapsed since the printing of the English translation of the Bible, by Myles Coverdale, afterwards Bishop of Exeter. This call was loudly responded to, throughout the united empire, both in, and out of, the national establishment, and considerable interest appears to have been excited, in consequence, upon the paramount question "of the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for salvation," (as defined by the sixth article of our Church,) "so that whatsoever is not "read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be "required of any man, that it should be believed as an arti- "cle of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salva- "tion." Hence the inalienable right of every human being to the possession, and perusal, of the Scriptures of eternal truth, as opposed to all the traditions, and inventions, of fallible creatures like himself; and hence, again, the indefensible injustice, and impiety, of any man, or order of men, presuming to refuse, or restrict, the circulation of the revealed will of the Almighty, as the common property of all his rational creatures.

It is in vain for the members of the Romish Church to assert that any change, or modification, has taken place in the decrees of the Council of Trent, and the oft-repeated prohibitions of the sovereign Pontiff against the circulation of the word of God. The Bull of the late Pope Pius VII.,

in particular, against the British, and Continental, Bible Societies, dated from Rome the 29th of June, 1816, characterizes the circulation of the Scriptures as "an abomi-"nable device, undermining the very foundation of religion;"—designates the Bible Society as "a pestilence"—"a defilement of the faith,"—and "of the most imminent "peril to souls"—as "the impious machination of inno-"vators,"—and "an abominable scheme, the wickedness "of which, it is the duty of the episcopal office to expose." His Holiness further declares that "the Holy Scriptures, "in the vulgar tongue, have through the temerity of men "been PRODUCTIVE OF MORE INJURY THAN ADVANTAGE"—enjoins strict adherence to the decree "of the 13th of "June 1757, which prohibits all versions of the Scriptures "in the vernacular tongues, except such as are approved "by the apostolic see, and published with annotations;"—and finally guards all true Papists against "the snares "which are prepared for their eternal destruction;" that is to say, by the translations, of our own, and all other, Protestant churches.

This Bull is of course in full force and validity: indeed any supposition to the contrary, would be to charge the supreme authority from which it emanated, with error, while he is as notoriously too infallible to be mistaken, as his system is too immutable to improve. Can it be any matter of surprise, after this, that they who both refuse to be guided by the inspired Scriptures, and withhold them from the people, should be left to fall into the delusions even of the heathens themselves? And can any argument present a stronger appeal to their own followers, to think, and act for themselves, than the awful consideration that "if "the blind lead the blind, BOTH shall fall into the ditch?" At all events, let British Christians prize, above all their other blessings, the inestimable privilege of using and circulating the revelation of God--that great and especial glory of their own Reformation; in which case, they will not fail to dread, and deprecate, in an equal degree, the in-

roads and encroachments of a church, which, while it is ostensibly founded on the Holy Scriptures, is proved, to demonstration, to have symbolized with the heathens of old, and, in conjunction with the Pharisees of a later age, to have made void those Scriptures by its own traditions.

P.S.—In addition to the numerous authorities which are either cited, or referred to, in this publication, the following Works will be found to support, and illustrate, the position of the writer, namely, that POPERY, properly so called, as defined by the council of Trent, is a modification of PAGANISM.

"A true and lively representation of Popery—showing "that Popery is only new-modelled Paganism, and per-"fectly destructive of the great ends, and purposes, of God "in the gospel." 1677.

"Gale's Court of the Gentiles." 2 vols. 4to. 1669-77.

"Conformité des Cérémonies modernes avec les Anci-"ennes, où l'on prouve, par des autorités incontestables, "que les cérémonies de l'Eglise Romaine sont empruntées "des Payens." Par *Pierre Mussard*—Genève, et Leyde. 1667.

Note.—An English Translation of *Mussard* was published in London in 1732, entitled, "Roma Antiqua et "Recens, or the Conformity of Ancient and Modern Cere-"monies, showing, from indisputable testimonies, that the "ceremonies of the Church of Rome are borrowed from "the Pagans, Translated from the French," [by James Dupré.]

"Papists no Catholics, and Popery no Christianity."—By Lloyd, Bishop of Worcester.

"The Conformity of Ancient and Modern Ceremonies." —Author uncertain.

"Popery not founded on Scripture."—4to. London, 1688. In the British Museum.

"Rise and growth of Popery, from Vanity to Supersti-

"tion—thence to worse than Heathen Idolatry."—8vo. London, 1680. In the British Museum.

"Conformità delle Ceremonie Cinesi coll' Idolatria "Greca e Romana."

"Pangano Papismus; or an exact Parallel between "Rome Pagan, and Rome Christian, in their Doctrines, "and Ceremonies."—By the Rev. Joshua Stopford, 1678. In the British Museum.

"A Comparison between Popery and Paganism."—By the Rev. Samuel Johnson, Chaplain to Lord William Russell. In the British Museum.

"A Discovery of Popish Paganism," deducing the Superstitions of the Romish Church from the Rites of Paganism.—By the Rev. Oliver Ormerod, Rector of Huntspill.

"The Conformity between Popery and Paganism il-"lustrated."—London, 4to. 1746. By the Rev. T. Seward, Prebendary of Salisbury. In the British Museum.

The work to which the writer has been chiefly indebted is entitled, "A Letter from Rome, showing an exact con-"formity between Popery and Paganism, or the Religion "of the present Roman Catholics derived from that of "their Heathen Ancestors."—By the Rev. Dr. Conyers Middleton. With a Preparatory Discourse and Appendix.

LONDON:
IBOTSON AND PALMER, PRINTERS, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.